THE MERCHANT OF VENICE by “William Shakespeare”
A Contemporary English Version,
Emended and Rectified, with Notes and Commentary,
by Jonathan Star

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUKE OF VENICE

PRINCE OF MOROCCO (MOROCHO-Q1, MOROCHUS-Q1), a suitor of Portia
PRINCE OF ARAGON (ARAGON), a suitor of Portia

ANTONIO (ANTONIO-Q1), a merchant of Venice, friend of Bassanio
BASSANIO, winner of Portia
LEONARDO, a servant to Bassanio
GRATZIANO (GRATIANO-Q1, GRAZIANO), friend of Bassanio, with Nerissa
LORENZO (LORENZO), friend of Gratiano, with Jessica
SALARINO, a friend of Antonio
SALANIO-Q1 (SOLANIO-Q1), a friend of Antonio
SALERIO, a messenger from Venice

SHYLOCK (SHYLOCKE-Q1) a Jewish money-lender
JESSICA, daughter of Shylock
TUBAL (TUBALL-Q1), a Jewish friend of Shylock

LAUNCELET-Q1 (LANCELET-Q2, LAUNCELOT, LANCELOT), a fool, servant of Shylock
OLD GOBBO (GOBBO), father to Launcelet

PORTIA, an heiress of Belmont
NERISSA, her waiting-woman
BALTHASAR-Q1 (BALTHAZAR), servant of Portia
STEPHANO (STEFANO), servant of Portia

MESSENGER, for Portia
SERVANT (SERVINGMAN), for Portia
MAN, messenger for Antonio
MESSENGER, for Jessica

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice,
a Jailor, Servants and other Attendants

[See Additional Notes, 0.1.1, for a further discussion on the names]
Editions

Editions and Printing Dates:
First Quarto (Q1), 1600. The Most Excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice.
Second Quarto (Q2), 1619. The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice.
Third Quarto (Q3), 1637. The Most Excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice.
First Folio (F1), 1623; Second Folio (F2), 1632; Third Folio (F3), 1663; Fourth Folio (F4), 1685

Punctuation Key

Punctuation Key:
b) Text found within special brackets { } indicates the original text as found in Q1.
c) Text found on the right of the body of the play, and the preceded by ‘/’ or ‘//’ indicates alternative renderings.
d) Words found within single brackets ⟨ ⟩ indicate text that was not found in the original yet was added to clarify the original. Words found within double brackets ⟨⟨ ⟩⟩ indicate text was added to the original and not indicated nor suggested by the original text.
e) Text found within open square brackets [ ] was not found in the original but is directly indicated by the original.
f) Text found within brackets [ ] indicate text that is found in the original but which is suspect.
g) An arrow ‘>’ indicates a commentary on the text
ACT ONE - Scene One (1.1)

Venice. Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio

―—Antonio 1
I know this hatred mocks all Christian virtue
But they I loathe: their very sight abhors me.
They are but vile infractions of nature,
A plague on all that is righteous and good. 2
And the contracts they use to loan their money, 3
Made 'neath the guile of friendship and trust, 4
Are none but instruments of fell deceit.
They would have men sign bonds to borrow money, 5
And if the sums are not repaid on time
Then, as forfeit, they would take everything.
All that a man has earned in his lifetime 6
Would come to naught and end in tearful ruin. 7
'Tis an obscene, despicable greed they show— 8
These heartless usurers. 9 There's a special place 9
In hell made just for them.

1. These opening lines of Antonio are not found in the original play; they were added to clarify the central conflict between Antonio and Shylock which is principally over usury not religion. In the opening of the original play we find Antonio lamenting about his somberness (i.e., his "sadness") yet Antonio's somber mood has no relevance to the play as a whole nor does it lay the groundwork for any action found in the play. [To understand usury as it was viewed in Elizabethan England, see Additional Note, 1.1.0]
2. / A plague upon the righteousness of man / A plague that crushes (destroys / ruins / shatters) the spirit of man
3. / And all their contracts, listing penalties / And all the loans they make with forfeitures
4. / Made with a show of kindness and of friendship / Made under pretense of kindness and friendship
5. / Taking a loan beyond their means to pay,
6. / All one has worked for and gained in his life / All that a man has gained in years of work
7. / Would soon come to a sad and ruinous end / Would end in sadness and a tearful ruin
8. / 'Tis a greed most obscene and despicable / It is a show of greed, gross and despicable
9. / They but entrap those who are most desperate:
   Having them sign a bond to borrow money
   For which they cannot repay. Then, as forfeit,
   And after great despair, all that these men have
   Is taken, all they have worked for is lost;
   All is but gone to these heartless usurers.
— Salanio

Those damnèd° Jews. / cursed

— Antonio

‘Tis not a Jewish thing° this usury—
‘Tis but a godless thing, a cursed thing,
An aberration felling° Jew and gentile— / A thing bereft of all humanity
A wretched thing. Enough of my complaints,° / But oft you’ve heard me moan
You know them° well.

— Salarino

And so we do, Antonio,
But here this face so grave, ‘tis not a sight° / thing / face
We know so well.° Why look ye so, my friend? 10 }} / We often see

— Antonio 11

In sooth,° I know not why I feel this way.° 12 / truth / {am so sad} / am so grave
[It wearies me, I know° it wearies you;]° 13 / you say / I think / it must
Yet how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff ‘tis made of, whereof it is born,

10. / But here this face so saddened, ‘tis a sight | We know not well. Why look ye so, my friend?
11. The original play begins here, with Antonio talking about his sad and worrisome state. The play opens in media res, in the middle of an ongoing conversation between Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio, where Antonio is answering a question that was asked before the action of the play begins.
12. The term sad generally means grave, serious, or deeply concerned. The commiserating images supplied by Salarino and Salanio (your mind is tossing on the ocean) suggest that Antonio’s state resembles some kind of dis-ease or worry rather than sadness or depression. In all of this we never discover why Antonio is so somber—is it his nature to be “sad” or has his worried state been brought on by some recent event concerning his business ventures? Or, perhaps, he is worried and “stressed out” over a secret meeting that Bassanio is having, with some woman, which may threaten Antonio’s intimate friendship with Bassanio. In either case, the issue of Antonio’s “sadness” or somberness has no bearing on the play nor do we ever hear of it again. Antonio’s talk of “sadness” could be a tool used by the author that provides a backdrop for the Sals to describe the grandeur of Antonio’s ventures. Some commentators hold that the early talk of “sadness” is meant to present a sense of foreboding but the jovial way that the subject is approached by the Sals precludes this. [See Additional Note, 1.1.1]
13. {It wearies me, you say it wearies you}
As it stands, this line is somewhat misplaced and may be an appendage from an earlier draft where the opening conversation was between Antonio, Gratiano, and Lorenzo, and where this line was voiced by Antonio to Gratiano. This line suggests that Antonio has spoken about his serious (“sad”) nature on numerous occasions, so much so that it wearies him (talking about it) and it wearies those who are hearing it for the umpteenth time. The line (as it appears in the original, expressed to the Sals) is also questionable since Antonio’s sadness seems to be something newly experienced by the Sals and not something they could have grown weary of. In addition, the Sals, who are unmitigated supporters of Antonio, would never have told Antonio that they were weary of hearing about his concerns (unlike Gratiano.)

I think: {you say} I hear, I know, I believe, I’m sure. The familiar and history-based phrase, you say, was likely directed to Gratiano—a person who was familiar with Antonio’s sad musings, and a person who would have told Antonio that he (Gratiano) was weary of hearing about it. As neither Salarino nor Salanio have heard much about Antonio’s sadness in the past—and as neither are so chummy and bold as to tell Antonio they are weary of hearing about it—neither would have made such a comment. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.2]
And why it lingers on\(^\circ\)\(^{14}\) I’ve yet to learn.\(^\circ\)
[And such a want-wit this mood\(^\circ\) makes of me]
[That I have much ado to know myself.] \(^{15}\)

/ And why it holds me so \(/ \) {I am to learn}
[sadness] / this somber mood makes

—Salarino

Your mind is tossing like the raging sea.\(^\circ\)
There \(\{\text{pointing}\}\) are your argosies\(^\circ\) with portly sails—
Streaming\(^\circ\) upon the wave\(^\circ\) like proud maestros\(^{16}\)
Or like the grand displays of a sea pageant.\(^{17}\)
See your ships rise above\(^\circ\) the smaller boats\(^{18}\)
That curtsy\(^\circ\) to them in awe and reverence\(^{19}\)
As they fly by with their grand, woven wings.\(^{20}\)

(Ah, what a sight it is!\(^{21}\)

—Salanio

Believe me, sir,
Were I involved in such ventures abroad\(^{21}\)
The better part of my concerns would rest\(^{0}\)
Upon\(^\circ\) my hopes\(^\circ\) abroad. And every day\(^{22}\)
I’d toss the grass\(^\circ\) to know where blows the wind,\(^{23}\)
And peer\(^\circ\) in maps for ports and piers and roads.

\(^{14}\) (And why it lingers on) / And why it grips me so
The line found in Q1 \(\{I \text{ am to learn}\}\) is truncated, containing only two iambs (feet), as opposed to the usual five. Thus, the line as it appears is likely an error. This short line could have resulted from a smudge mark, which rendered the text unreadable, or by some other such error.

[For theories about this truncated line, See Additional Notes, 1.1.5]

\(^{15}\) There are several anomalies with respect to Antonio’s opening lines, including the words ‘you say’ \(\{2\}\), the truncated line 5, and the repetitive and unsupported content of lines 6 and 7. Clearly these later two lines \(\{6-7\}\) are orphaned, repeat the sentiment of the previous lines, and weaken the overall import of the passage. Due to their prominent position in the original play (appearing in the opening passage), and being that they are rather harmless, they could remain; being that they weaken the passage, and may have found their way into the text by error, these lines should be deleted.

[See Additional Notes, 1.1.6]

\(^{16}\) (Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood) / Like proud magnificoes upon the wave,
**burghers**: wealthy Venetians, rich citizens

\(^{17}\) (Or as it were the pageants of the sea) / Or like the grand water-floats of a pageant
**pageants of the sea**: floats and displays that were used on ships, as part of a festive pageantry held on the water.

\(^{18}\) (Do overpeer the petty traffickers) / Where they but dwarf the petty traffickers
**overpeer**: peer over, look down on, tower above
**petty traffickers**: / small trading ships

\(^{19}\) (That curtesy to them, do then reverence) / That come to lower their topsails in reverence / That bow to them and do them reverence

**curtsy** \(\{Q1 = \text{cursie}\}\) / **curtsy**: bow down. Refers to the image of: a) small ships that bob around in the wake of a passing argosy, which seemingly (and impelled by the wake) bow down or curtsy to these larger ships, or b) small cargo ships that would lower their topmasts as a sign of respect at the passing of a much larger ship.

**woven wing**: The large sails of Antonio’s ships are likened to the wings of flying bird (for their speed) or to the ‘billowing splendor’ of the clothes worn by wealthy burghers.

\(^{20}\) / Were all my wealth involved in such ventures

\(^{21}\) / Should be still] / Each day I’d be

**still**: always

\(^{22}\) (Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind)
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my enterprise, no doubt,
Would make me worry.  

—Salarino

My breath, cooling broth,
Would blow me to a shiver when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
Each time I saw the sandy hour-glass run,
I’d think of shallow flats and sandy banks,
And see my ship, the Andrew, docked in sand,
With her top-sail a-hung below her ribs—
Kiss her grave just like a burial shroud.
And should I go to church, instead of praying,
I’d see the holy edifice of stone
And straightaway think of the dang’rous rocks
Which, by a mere touch of my vessel’s side,
Would spread her cache of spice upon the wave,
And robe the roaring waters with her silk,
And thus, in sum, reduce my worth to naught.
Had I the mind to think on all of this,
And should I think on all that could go wrong,
I, too, would have a mind o’ercome by dread.
[So tell me not: I know Antonio
Is loath to think upon his parlous ventures.]

24. [Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt] / Misfortune to my ventures would, no doubt
25. By this description, and the preceding ones, we see that Salarino and Salanio are well-versed in the jargon of merchants, and both appear to be involved in the business of trade, as is Antonio.
26. Laid out upon her burial like a shroud / Just like a shroud placed upon her grave / A shroud that kisses the ground of her burial / And now to kiss the ground wherein she lies
27. [Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs | To kiss her burial]
   vailing: lowering, bringing down
   ribs: the hull of a ship, made up of wooden ribs or center beams
   The image here is of a ship overturned, with her top-sails now lower than her hull, kissing the ground. This is the place of the ship’s burial, where the once proud sails have now become its burial shroud. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.28]
28. Would scatter all her spices on the wave
29. I, too, would have a mind that’s fraught with sadness
30. Is much distressed over his parlous ventures

Salarino (and Salanio) are describing Antonio’s risky business ventures, which would elicit concern, worry, agitation, stress, etc. rather than sadness. (Thus, ‘sadness’ in this context should be taken to mean, ‘worry, concern, distress,’ etc.) This talk of Antonio’s sadness seems to be an import of an earlier draft of the play, where the play initially opened with Antonio talking with Gratiano and Lorenzo about his (Antonio’s) sad nature. Later in the scene we see the same conversation about Antonio’s sadness repeated with Gratiano—and this relates to Antonio’s sad and depressed nature, and not a new-arising sadness, related to a specific conditions (as thought by Salarino and Salanio).
30. Is much distressed over his parlous ventures.

These two lines appear to be too bold for Salarino or Salanio—sounding more like something Gratiano would say. These lines may be vestiges of an earlier draft that involved a conversation between Antonio and Gratiano. Thus, these two lines could be deleted without any meaningful loss and it might slightly improve the flow of the text.
Believe me—no. I thank my fortune for it:
My ventures are not in one vessel trusted,
Nor in one place, nor does my wealth depend
Upon the fortune of this present year.
Therefore, my ventures do not cause distress.

—Salanio
Why then, you are in love.

—Antonio
Nay, nay!

Not in love neither? Then you must be somber
Because you are not destined to be merry;
For ‘twere as easy now for you to laugh,
And leap, and say that you are merry, only
Because you are not sad. By the two faces
Of Janus—one that laughs and one that cries—
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will smile so much their eyes have shut
And laugh like parrots when all else are crying.
And others so acerbic in their mode
That they’ll not show their teeth in way of smile

—Antonio

Previously, Antonio’s “sadness” was thought to be venture-related, then love-related—both causes that Antonio denied. Here Salanio is surmising that Antonio must be sad because it is his nature to be sad. This philosophical address of Antonio’s sad nature is repeated later in the scene by Gratziano; such speculation seem fitting the irreverence of Gratziano not Salanio. Thus, the line mouthed here by Salanio are unbefitting and out of place. It is likely, that in an earlier draft, Salanio’s words were mouthed by Gratziano (or possibly Lorenzo) and herein transposed (somewhat imperfectly) to Salanio. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.47]

Janus: the Roman god of exits and entrances. He has two faces which look in opposite directions: one face is smiling and the other is frowning.

This line refers to people who smile so much so that their cheek muscles have atrophied and now keep their eyes half-shut—and now they can only peep through them. The image, akin to the laughing face of Janus, is of a person smiling so much that it looks as if he is wearing the mask of a smiling face.

Laugh like parrots: a) refers to the parrot who by rote response laughs at everything, even a mournful tune. Hence, laughing like a parrot refers to one who laughs at everything; one who is always laughing; b) implies a loud screeching laughter rather than the actual laughter of a parrot.

The music of a bagpipe was considered woeful, which should bring on tears not laughter.
Though stern-browed Nestor swear the jest be funny.  

\[39\] Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratziano.

Here comes Bassanio, your most favored friend, / dearest of friends {most noble kinsman} 
With Gratziano and Lorenzo. Farewell. 
We leave you now with better company.

—Salarino

We\[o\] would have stayed until we\[o\] made you merry, / I 
If worthier friends had not prevented us.\[o\] / me

—Antonio

\(\text{Nay Salarino—and my friend Salanio—}\)\[40\] 
Your worth is very dear in my regard.\[o\] / esteem 
I take it your own business calls you, 
And you embrace th’occasion\[o\] to depart. / the moment

—Salarino [to those approaching] 
Good morrow, my good lords.\[o\] / Good day, good gentlemen

—Bassanio [also in greeting] 
Good signors both, when shall we laugh? Say when? 
You’ve become strangers. Must it be that way?  

—Salanio\[42\] 
We’ll make our leisure time\[o\] fit in with\[o\] yours. {leisures} / free time {to attend on}

—Lorenzo

My friend\[o\] Bassanio, here\[o\] you have found Antonio. {lord} {since}

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\[39\] Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable. 
Nestor: a Greek officer of the Iliad, famous for his somberness and gravity. 
/ Not even at a jest able to rouse | Stern-browed Nestor to rambunctious laughter. 
/ Not even at a joke that could bestir | The somber Nestor into drunken laughter.

\[40\] The name of these two characters, Salarino and Salanio, are never mentioned in the play even though it is customary to name a character upon his entrance or during the first scene in which he appears. The failure to ever mention the names of these minor but significant characters may be because they were not conceived as part of the original draft but added as part of a later draft. Thus, throughout the play, these characters remain nameless. To rectify this omission, a line that includes both their names, could be added here.

\[41\] You grow exceedingly strange. Must it be so? 
exceedingly strange: (a) like strangers, (b) strange in your ways, i.e., too reserved, too serious, not willing to get together for a laugh.
Must it be so? (a) i.e., it should not be that way and we must do something about it—such as get together for a laugh. 
(b) must you be so serious and not willing to laugh with us.

\[42\] In Q1 the speech heading reads Sal. Most commentators assign this line to Salarino. Here it is attributed to Salanio. 
This exchange seems more of a gratuitous gesture than an actual intention to get together. We sense a cordial distance between Bassanio and Salarino-Salanio, as they all seek Antonio’s attention.
[aside, to Salarino]

We, too, will leave soon, but at dinner time, I pray you, have in mind where we must meet. / bear

— Salarino

We will not fail you.

— Salanio  (We’ll be there as planned.)

Exeunt Salarino and Salanio

— Gratziano

You look not well, Signior Antonio; You care too much for the things of this world. The ones who buy this world with too much care Are apt to lose it for want of enjoyment. / Do end up losing it for want of joy

Believe me friend, you don’t look like yourself. / you’re not being yourself

— Antonio

I hold the world but as the world, Gratziano, A stage where every man must play a part— And mine’s a sad one. / grave

— Gratziano

Let me play the fool: / me

With mirth and laughter let old smiles come, / wrinkles

And let my liver rather heat with joy / wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within, / veins run warm with blood

Sit like a marble statue of his grandsire. / granite // carving

44. The meeting Lorenzo is referring to involves a plan to steal Jessica [2.4] from her father’s house. This meeting involves the two Sals, not Bassanio. Hence, Lorenzo’s reminder of such a meeting to Bassanio—and the assurance made in the next line by Bassanio [I will not fail you]—as found in the original, is amiss. [See next note].
45. In the original, this line is attributed to Bassanio, and reads: ‘I will not fail you’ and is spoken after Salarino and Salanio have already exited. Thus Bassanio is telling Lorenzo that he (Bassanio) will not fail him (Lorenzo) and that he will be there as planned. However, there is no future plan involving Lorenzo and Bassanio. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.72]
46. Some commentators suggest that the play may have initially opened here, at line 73. Gratziano’s opening statement resembles that of Antonio’s opening, and the discourse that follows is similar in tone to the previous conversation had with Salarino and Salanio. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.73] [See Appendix: The Three Sallies]
47. {You have too much respect upon the world}
48. {They lose it that do buy it with much care} / When too concerned about what can go wrong | You can’t enjoy all the things that are right. / All this concern with loss does have a cost: | You can’t enjoy all the great things that you have.

Gratziano is saying that one who buys life with too much care (i.e., spends too much time in worry and sadness), cannot enjoy life. In other words, things usually turn out poorly for one who is too concerned about how things will turn out.
49. {Believe me, you are marvellously changed} / Believe me, you are decidedly different / Believe me you look nothing like yourself / Believe me when I say, you’re not yourself / Believe me, friend, you are completely changed
50. {Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster}
Sleep when he wakes, and become ill with jaundice\textsuperscript{51} / bring about the jaundice
By being peevish\textsuperscript{51} from morning till night? / cranky / sad-faced
I say Antonio—I speak out of love—\textsuperscript{52}
There are some men who show no expression, / reveal no emotion
Their face is held in a willful stillness
Just like the muck cov’ring\textsuperscript{53} a stagnant pond; / atop
They hope that others will look well upon them
As who should say,\textsuperscript{55} ‘I am Sir Oracle, / Who proudly say
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!’
O my Antonio, I do know of those\textsuperscript{54} {these}
Who are reputed\textsuperscript{54} wise for saying naught, / Who are but held as
When I am sure if they should move to speak
‘Twould almost\textsuperscript{56} dam the ears of those who listen / surely
And cause their brothers to say they are fools.
I’ll tell thee more of this another time.
But fish not with this melancholy bait
To gain the worthless\textsuperscript{57} opinion of others, / For the ill-gained / unvalued
That one can catch\textsuperscript{57} as eas’ly as fool gudgeon— / That can be caught
\langle A fish disposed to bite\textsuperscript{57} at any\textsuperscript{57} bait.\rangle / well-known to bite // ev’ry
Come good Lorenzo. Fare thee well for now; \textsuperscript{58} {awhile}
I'll finish with my preaching\textsuperscript{58} after dinner. {end my exhortation}

—Lorenzo
Well, we will leave you then, till dinner-time.\textsuperscript{58}
I must be one of these same dumb wise men

\textsuperscript{51} {Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice} / creep into an illness / Sleep when awake and give himself an illness

jaundice: a disease related to the liver and caused by an excess of yellow bile; as such, it brings a yellowish complexion to the skin and whites of the eyes. Up until the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, this disease was thought to have a psychosomatic origin. Hence, Gratziano is saying that Antonio is going to get jaundice as a result his depressed disposition (which makes him appear as though he is asleep when awake).

\textsuperscript{52} {I tell the what, Antonio— | I love thee, and ‘tis my love that speaks;}

\textsuperscript{53} {There are a sort of men whose visages | Do cream and mantle like a standing pond | And do a willful stillness entertain}

cream and mantle: cover over and mask; become pale and mask-like. This image suggests a) the algae that floats upon the surface of a stagnant pond (covering the interior of the pond), or b) the covering of cream on milk.

\textsuperscript{54} {With purpose to be dressed in an opinion}

\textsuperscript{55} {Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit} / As men of profound wisdom and insight.

gravity: authority, seriousness, weight

profound conceit: deep thinking; those who deeply contemplate the matter

\textsuperscript{56} {If they should speak, would almost dam those ears.}

dam: dam, clog up, block, stop

damn: damn, curse, foul

\textsuperscript{57} {But fish not with this melancholy bait | For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.}

fool gudgeon: gudgeon are fish which were thought to be gullible, easy believers in the bait, (and which would bite and anything). Thus they were easy to catch. Some editions use Pope’s emendation of: fool’s gudgeon.

opinion: the opinion that others will think you are wise because you look sad and do not open your mouth.

\textsuperscript{58} There are three direct references that the parties are going meet later for dinner [70, 104, 105], plus a response to those references [72]. Is dinner in these references the same as the supper which Bassanio has the night he leaves for Belmont or is there some other meeting indicated?
For Gratziano never lets me speak.

—Gratziano
Well, keep my company for two more years
And you’ll forget the sound of your own tongue.°

—Antonio
Farewell. I’ll grow in talk next time. ⁵⁹

—Gratziano
Please do—
Silence is virtue° in dried tongue of ox
And in craggy old maids who’ve got the pox. ⁶⁰

Exeunt Gratziano and Lorenzo

—Antonio
He speaks a great deal yet says° not a thing. ⁶¹

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⁵⁹. {Fare you well. I’ll grow a talker for this gear} / Farewell, I’ll grow more of a talker next time

gear: a) discourse, talk. ‘Farewell, I’ll take your advice and become more of a talker (next time we meet):

b) matter, affair. ‘Farewell, now that you’re gone, and I’m with Bassanio, I’ll become a talker—for this matter, now that there is something relevant to speak about,’

c) reason ‘Farewell, I’ll talk more (with respect to your advice) so that others do not think that I silent (for the reason you mentioned) to try and get others to think I am full of wisdom and profound understanding—which is not the case.’

⁶⁰. {Thanks, I’faith, for silence is only commendable | In a neat’s tongue dried and a maid not vendible.}

⁶¹. {It is that any thing now.} / He speaks and speaks, and yet says not a thing  / He speaks a lot, yet says a lot of nothing.

This line, as it appears in Q1, is missing three syllables and does not fit the standard meter. Editors have treated this anomalous line in several ways: A) Left it as is. B) Deleted the opening ‘It’ and posited that the line as a question: ‘Is that anything now?’—which means: ‘What was all that talk about?’ This renders the line somewhat intelligible, but does not correct the line structure. (This emendation was first proposed by Rowe). C) Changed It to Yet: ‘Yet is that anything now?’ With this emendation, Antonio is apparently referring to the newfound silence (which is being enjoyed since Gratziano, the talker, has just left). This emendation is based upon the supposition that ‘Yet’ was found in the original manuscript, and somehow became ‘Yt’ and then ‘It.’) All these textual contortions do not improve the line. It is most likely that the original contained a full five iambs and part of the line had become unreadable. Thus, the typesetter did his best in setting what part of the line he could read.

We find that the lines of Bassanio, which follow this one, are also corrupt in that they do not adhere to the standard meter. Hence, one possibility is that the name Gratziano was originally intended to be part of Antonio’s line, and somehow got shifted to Bassanio. If so, the lines might have appeared as follows:

Ant. Did Gratziano say anything now?
Bass. He speaks an infinite deal of nothing.

Ay, more than any man in all of Venice . . .

[See Additional Notes, 1.1.112]
—Bassanio

Our Gratiano speaks an infinite
Amount of nothing,⁶² more than any man
In all of Venice. His main point is like⁶³
Two grains of wheat, hid in two bushels⁶⁴ of chaff,
Where you must seek all day ere you find them,
And when you have them, they’re not worth the search.⁶⁵

—Antonio

Well, tell me now about this same lady
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you, today, promised to tell me of.

62. Bassanio’s opening talk can be seen as a chummy elaboration upon Antonio’s previous remark about Gratiano’s empty talk. In Q1, these lines do not appear in meter, which is odd since all the verse preceding it and following it, are in meter. Moreover, these are the first lines uttered by our romantic hero, which, though light-hearted and playful, should, at least, be delivered in the standard meter. It could be, however, for no clear reason, that this non-metered opening by Bassanio was a deliberate attempt to first present Bassanio as somewhat awkward with his words. Most likely, however, (and consistent with Antonio’s previous line, which is corrupt) this non-metered opening by Bassanio resulted from some problem with the reading of the text and not by the author’s design. Q1 (uncorrected) reads: { Gratiano speaks an infinite deale of nothing more then any man in all Venice, his reasons are as two grains of wheate hid in two bushels of chaffe: you shall seeke all day ere you finde them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.}. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.118]

63. [His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff:]

his reasons: his point, his conclusions; the value of what he says

/ All of his wit are as two grains of wheat | Hid in two bushels full of worthless chaff—

64. / In all of Venice. And, his final point

is like a grain of wheat in a heap of chaff:

65. / He speaks an infinite deal of nothing, | More so than any man in all of Venice. | His point resembles but two grains of wheat | Hid in two bushels of chaff. You must seek | All day before you find them; and when you | Finally have them, they’re not worth the search.

66. {Well, tell me now what lady is the same | To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage}

Some commentators surmise that Antonio’s sadness has come about due to Bassanio’s secret rendezvous with a woman. However, this conclusion is forced and unlikely. Antonio’s sadness is a result of his disposition, which is confirmed by Antonio when he states that the part he has been selected to play, on the world stage, is a sad one [78-79].

Bassanio’s potential love interest may have exacerbated Antonio’s worsrsome condition but this, too, is unlikely, since Bassanio did not even know the identity of the woman with whom Bassanio was meeting. All Antonio knew was that Bassanio was meeting with some woman, whose identity he swore to keep secret—the meeting of which he promised to tell Antonio about (after it was over). Bassanio was well aware of the nature of the meeting, and that the subject discussed involved Antonio in some way; and that is why Bassanio told Antonio about the ‘secret’ meeting and told him that he (Bassanio) was going to tell him about what he learned from the meeting today. (We can assume that the meeting took place yesterday, as Bassanio would not delay in telling Antonio about it—especially if Antonio’s help, with respect to actuating the plan formulated during the meeting, was needed.)

Who was this lady to whom Bassanio swore to have a secret with (and to keep the meeting as well as the the identity of the woman with whom he was meeting with a secret)? Certainly it was not Portia, as Portia would not have arranged such a meeting nor would she have any reason to meet with Bassanio. Neither was this a meeting with some love interest or it would not have been so secretive and Bassanio would have no reason to discuss it with Antonio.

In the meeting we know that Bassanio learned about Portia and the lottery—yet this was not something that needed to be sealed by a vow of secrecy as this was public knowledge. The meeting must have had an undisclosed purpose such that Bassanio could not reveal the identity of the lady with whom he was meeting to his dearest friend (neither before or after the meeting.) Nor was Bassanio at liberty to tell his dearest friend the purpose of the meeting or what was discussed in the meeting. All we know is that Bassanio does not talk about the meeting nor does he reveal the identity of the woman he met with—the one he promised to tell Antonio about. He only talks about the course of action he needs to take as a result of the meeting.

So, whom did Bassanio meet with and what was the purpose of the meeting? All indications suggest that he met with Nerissa, Portia’s trusted handmaid, to discuss Portia and the lottery (unbeknownst to Portia). Bassanio told Antonio about the meeting because, as he correctly anticipated, he needed to borrow a large sum of money (from Antonio) in order to carry out the plan that was hatched between Nerissa and himself in the meeting. [See, Additional Notes, 1.1.120]
—Bassanio 67

‘Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have depleted my savings\(^\text{c}\)\(^\text{68}\) {disabled mine estate}
By sometimes\(^\text{c}\) showing a more swelling port\(^\text{c}\)\(^\text{69}\) {something} / lavish style
Than my faint means could rightfully support;\(^\text{c}\)
Nor do I moan about being deprived\(^\text{c}\)\(^\text{70}\) {would grant continuance}
Of\(^\text{c}\) such a noble life.\(^\text{c}\) Now my chief care
Is to come fully clear\(^\text{c}\) of all my debts\(^\text{c}\)
Wherein\(^\text{c}\) my years of prodigal\(^\text{c}\) spending\(^\text{71}\) / In which // of wastefulness and
Hath left me gagged.\(^\text{72}\) To you Antonio\(^\text{73}\)
I owe the most in money and in love,
And by your love I am granted permission\(^\text{c}\)\(^\text{74}\) / I have a warranty
To unburden all\(^\text{c}\) my plans\(^\text{c}\) and purposes
On how to clear myself of all my debt.\(^\text{c}\)\(^\text{75}\) / of every debt

—Antonio

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,\(^\text{c}\) / tell me your plan
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,

---

67. Bassanio tells nothing of the woman he met with, only about his plan and his need of Antonio’s help
68. Bassanio seems to be part of an aristocratic class called ‘gentlemen’—a class of young, single men living off their
parentage inheritance (or estate). As they do not need to work, their days are concerned with entertainment, parties, feasting,
womanizing, etc.
69. {By something showing a more swelling port} / By showing off a more lavish life-style
70. / Nor do I make moan that such noble\(^\text{c}\) spending / lordly
   / Has been abridged.\(^\text{c}\) But now my chief concern / cut short
71. / In which // of wastefulness and
72. To you Antonio
73. / I have a warranty
74. To tell you all {plots}
75. / of every debt

---

And now Bassanio claims: *I will unburden all my plots and purposes* yet he never discloses anything to Antonio about the
woman with whom he met nor his true plot—a plot which involves winning Portia by way of a lottery not by customary
courtship (as Antonio may be led to believe). Bassanio tells Antonio about Portia, and his sureness of winning her, but does
not disclose the means (i.e. the lottery), nor the identity of the woman with whom he met, nor the true reason as to why he is
so certain (and ‘questionless’) of victory. Bassanio (leading Antonio to believe his venture involves a typical courtship
scenario) tells Antonio he is sure to win her because she once looked upon him favorably—but such a favorable glance has
no bearing on his odds of winning her. It is irrelevant. He can only win her by choosing the right chest, through his own wit
and wisdom—or through some other kind of help—and not through anything Portia’s favorable glances could bestow.
Within the eye of honour, be assured
My purse, my person, my extremest means
Lie all unlock’d to to your every need.

—Bassanio

In my school days, when I had lost an arrow,
I shot another one in the same way
And in the same direction yet, this time,
With a more careful and advised watch;
Then, in my vent’ring for the second arrow,
I oft found both.

I urge this childhood proof
Because what follows is pure innocence:
I owe you much and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but, if you’d please
To shoot another shaft the self-same way
As you did shoot the first, [and loan to me]
Again, one more amount,
I do not doubt—
Watching the aim with care—that I’ll find both:
I will return the sums that now you risk,

76. {And if it stand, as you yourself still do, | Within the eye of honour}
    > if your plan is righteous, honorable, above board, ethical, etc.
    Antonio is adding a caveat here. Bassanio’s plan must stand within the eye of honour. However, the plan as we know it,
    which involves a chance lottery (or, as we may surmise, receiving a guarantee of help from Nerissa if certain conditions are
    met) is not honorable. As such, Bassanio does not tell Antonio the actual plan, nor “unburden all his pots and purposes.” He
    presents what appears to be a normal courtship scenario without any mention of the actual plot or circumstances. (When does
    Antonio finally learn about the true nature of the chance venture?—and what does he do when he finds out that Bassanio has
    borrowed the money under a false pretense?) It seems Antonio’s blind love for Bassanio causes him to see past all of
    Bassanio’s flaws, even the avoidable action of failing to cure Antonio’s bond when he had means enough, and time enough, to
    do so. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.137]

77. Bassanio asking Antonio for money—yet again—might suggests some kind of abuse. In the past Bassanio has borrowed
    money from Antonio to ‘show a more swelling port’ and to live beyond his means—and he made no attempt to repay any of
    the borrowed money. Here again, knowing that most of Antonio’s money is tied up in his ventures, Bassanio again comes to
    Antonio. It seems that Antonio loves this young man, who is high-spirited and who brings to Antonio a sense of life he is
    missing—so much so that he is willing to do anything for him. Bassanio is aware of Antonio’s love and he uses that
    affection—perhaps in an innocent or careless way, as opposed to a deceitful or knowingly abusive way—for his own financial
    benefit. Bassanio, too, has genuine love for Antonio, so the relationship is one of mutual support and friendship.

78. [I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight | The selfsame way]
    / I shot another in the selfsame way | And in the selfsame direction, but then
    / I’d see exactly where the next one fell, | And in venturing forth I oft found both.
   / Then I would venture for the second shaft, | And oft found both.
   / Then, by adventuring for the second, | I oft found both.

79. Often—often, but not always; the venture had some risk and sometimes both arrows were lost.

80. Not true! The plan—which is never truly told to Antonio—is far from innocent. In the highest embodiment (and most
    unlikely scenario) it involves a deceitful appearance and an uncertain choice between three caskets; in the lowest embodiment
    (and most likely scenario) it involves “cheating” (for good reasons, no doubt) and the unfair winning of another’s wealth. The
    plan, moreover, is somewhat mercenary; it is first proposed as a way to clear up all of Bassanio’s debts rather than the defiant
    and risky action of someone truly in love.

81. {. . . I do not doubt, | As I will watch the aim, or to find both}
I do not doubt. . .
    / That I will watch the aim and then find both
    / I’ll watch the aim with care and find them both

/ My bank, my body // and my every means
{to your occasions} / to what e’re you may need
And funds enough\(^o\) to clear\(^o\) my former debts.\(^82\) / And all I need // rest

—Antonio\(^83\)

You know me well, yet herein spend\(^o\) but time, / waste
To try my love with needless circumstance\(^o, 84\), / burdensome detail
And certainly,\(^o\) you offer me more wrong,\(^85\) {And out of doubt}
In doubting\(^o\) my utmost desire to help,\(^86\)\(^87\) / questioning
Than if you had made waste of\(^o\) all I have.\(^o\) / laid waste to // my wealth
Then do but say to me\(^o\) what I should do, / All you need do is say
The most you know that\(^o\) may be done by me, {That in your knowledge}
And I am pressed unto it.\(^o\) Therefore speak.\(^88\) / And I’ll be bound to do it

—Bassanio

Alas, there is in Belmont a lady / a lady in Belmont
Who has since come upon a countless fortune;\(^o\) \(^89\) / great wealth and fortune
And she is fair and, fairer than all words,\(^o\) \(^90\) / that word
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes,\(^o\) from her eyes,\(^o\) / often // with her glance

---

82. {Or bring your latter hazard back again | And thankfully rest debtor for the first.}
   or: and
   **latter hazard:** your present loan or risk (which I will watch more carefully than I did your earlier loans).
   **debtors for the first:** all my previous debts, debtors from before (i.e., the first arrow which has been lost).
   **thankfully rest:** pay back (with gratitude); put to rest, clear up
   Thus, I will bring back to you all the money you risk on me now (the second arrow) and, finding this second arrow (which is all of Portia’s wealth) I will be able to play off all my previous debts (which are the first arrows that I lost).
   [See Additional Notes, I.1.151]

83. Antonio is so eager to accommodate Bassanio that he agrees to help him without so much as hearing his plan. He assumes that Bassanio is going to woo Portia in accordance with customary acts of courtship; he assumes this courtship is “within the eye of honour”; he hears nothing of the hazardous risk involved. From what we come to know (and something which Bassanio intimates in his proposed plan to pay off his debts) the plan is decidedly a scheme; as we surmise, Bassanio can only “win” Portia by winning a lottery (i.e., by choosing the right casket) which is something he is sure accomplish only if he has been assured of receiving some kind of help with that task.

84. {To wind about my love with circumstance:}
   **wind:** a) blow wind, be long-winded. **wind about:** curve, meander, be indirect
   **wind about my love:** not approach me directly; not know that I love you and will give you what you ask (without your needing to waste breath on details).
   **with circumstance:** needless details, circumlocutions, beating around the bush

85. {And, out of doubt, you do me more wrong}
   **out of doubt:** beyond doubt

86. {In making question of my uttermost}
   / In questioning my uttermost compliance\(^o\) // abidance

87. /And try my love\(^o\) with circuitous pleas\(^o\) / abidance
   That one so dear as you need never make;
   And now your doubt about my willingness
   To give my uttermost,\(^o\) does me more wrong / you everything

88. A loose rendering:
   / All you need do is tell me what you want; | Surely you know I will give it to you, | For my heart cannot say ‘no’: therefore speak. All this is an expression of Antonio’s slavish and beseeching love for Bassanio

89. / In Belmont is a lady richly left |
90. / Who has recently come upon a fortune / Who has been left a fortune beyond measure
I did receive fair hints of her affection. 

Her name is Portia—and she’s worth no less \{and nothing undervalued\}

Than Cato’s daughter, Brutus’ Portia. 

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,

For the four winds blow in from every coast

Renownèd suitors; and her sunny locks / golden

Adorn her temples like a golden fleece \{Hang on\}

Which turns her country estate at Belmont / beautiful // gardens

Into the promising shores of Colchis. \{Which makes he r seat of Belmont Colchos’ strand\}

Where many Jasons come in quest of her. 

O my Antonio, had I but the means

To hold a rival place with one of them \{along with them\}

My mind portends me of certain success, \{foretells\}

That I, without doubt, should be fortunate. 

—Antonio

You knows’t that all my fortunes are at sea;

Neither have I money, nor sufficient store \{commodity} / goods to sell

To raise a present sum. \{To raise the sum right now\}

---

91. \{I did receive fair speechless messages\}

fair speechless messages: beautiful and affectionate glances (which silently told me of her affection)

/ I did receive her loving messages

/ I did receive the most adoring glances / loving of glances

92. golden fleece: Jason was the rightful heir to his father’s throne but was deprived of his rights by his uncle. Thus, to settle the matter, Jason and his uncle made an agreement: if Jason could bring back the golden fleece from Colchis (which all believed was an impossible task) then Jason would be restored to his throne and gain back his kingdom. So Jason and the Argonauts traveled to the shores (strand) of Colchis to retrieve the golden fleece. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.170]

93. \{Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos’ strand\}

/ Which now makes Belmont like the shores of Colchis

seat: residence

Colchos’ strand (also ‘strand’): the shores of Colchis—the land where the Golden Fleece resided. The image evoked is of many suitors (like Jason seeking his fortune) landing upon the shores of Belmont to obtain Portia (who is likened to the golden fleece in both riches and beauty).

94. This line can be added for further clarity: (Each one in quest of her riches and beauty.)

95. This plea of Bassanio takes a few shifts: first from a personal connection to Portia, to a classical description of her beauty, and back to a more personal plea to Antonio, with O my Antonio.

96. Why is Bassanio impelled to borrow such a large sum of money and put his friend at risk? [See Additional Note, 1.1.174]

97. \{I have a mind presages me such thrift\}

/ I have a mind foretells me of success / I have a premonition of success / My mind tells me of assured success

presages: foretells, augurs, give a premonition of

such thrift: such success, such profit (which will comes from Portia and her fortune)

98. \{I should questionless be fortunate.\}

/ That I, without a doubt, shall win her fortune / That I, without question, should win her love.

How does Bassanio come to be questionless, without doubt, about being fortunate—about winning Portia through a chance drawing of one of three chests? Is he so certain of his ability, or does something else portend his assured success? And what, exactly, is Bassanio questionless about?—that he will win Portia’s love, or the lottery, or both?

[See Additional Notes, 1.1.76]

The theory here is that in a prior meeting (with someone to whom Bassanio “swore a secret pilgrimage”) Bassanio received assurance from Nerissa that she would help him with the lottery if he could win Portia’s love. Thus, having received prior hints from Portia, and confident in his charm and wooing ability, Bassanio was “doubtless” that he could win Portia’s heart, get Nerissa’s help, and win Portia and her wealth by way of the lottery. This theory is also supported in 2.9: when Nerissa hears news of an unannounced suitor from Venice, she already knows (and hopes) that it is Bassanio, saying “Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!” [See Appendix: The Lottery]

99. / Nor have I money, nor the extra goods
Try what my credit in Venice can do;\textsuperscript{100}  
Let it be stretched\textsuperscript{101} even to the utmost\textsuperscript{101}  
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.  
Go and make inquiries—and so will I—  
Secure the funds from wherever you must,  
Based on my name, my credit, and my trust.\textsuperscript{102}

\textit{Exeunt}

\textsuperscript{100} {Try what my credit can in Venice do.}  
\textsuperscript{101} {That shall be racked, even to the utmost}  
\textsuperscript{102} {Where money is, and I no question make | To have it of my trust, or for my sake.}

\textbf{racked:} painfully stretched, as if on the rack. > Stretch my credit to the utmost; get every ducat you can.
\textbf{and I no question make:} a) and I am sure, I do not question it (that you will get the sums you seek, based upon my credit or my reputation); b) and I will not question (nor place restrictions upon) from where you get the money—get it from wherever you can
a) / Where money is: and I’m sure just the same, | You’ll get it based on my credit or name  
b) / Secure the funds from whomever you may | Based on my name, my worth, my trust to pay.
Portia’s house at Belmont. Enter Portia with her waiting-woman, Nerissa.¹

—Portia
By my word,² Nerissa, this little³ body is aweary of this great world.

—Nerissa
You would be, sweet⁴ madam, if your miserie⁵ were in the same abundance as⁶ your good fortunes. And yet, for all⁷ I see, those who live in excess are as sick as those who starve with too little.⁸ It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.⁹ Excess is soon accompanied by gray⁰ hairs, while moderation⁵ brings longer life.¹²

—Portia
Fine words and well-delivered. ¹³

—Nerissa
They would be better if well-followed.

—Portia

₁. The name Nerissa is derived from the Italian root, ner, which means dark, thus suggesting that Nerissa has dark hair or a dark complexion, while Portia’s complexion is fair and her hair is blond. A waiting-woman is different from a maid: she is not a servant, and she can marry whomever she chooses. Hence, Nerissa plays the part of a facilitator and confidant for Portia rather than a servant.

₂. {by my troth} In truth / I tell you truly / In faith.

₃. little body: a figure of speech which implies that the body is small or frail in comparison to the ‘great world’ (rather than implying a body that is small in comparison to other bodies).

₄. / in equal measure to

₅. {they are as sick that surfeit too much as they that starve with nothing}

₆. / A large amount of happiness, therefore, comes to one who is positioned in the middle, between the extremes of life.

₇. / Therefore, the means to happiness is to be seated in the mean

₈. / Excess makes you old before your time, while moderation allows you to live longer.

₉. / Good sentences and well-pronounced}

₁₀. sweet: dear / fine all: {aught} indulge: {surfeit} / glut / stuff themselves

₁¹. gray hairs: {white hairs} > rapid aging, aging before one’s time

₁². moderation: {competency} / sufficiency / having what you need

₁₃. brings longer life: {lives longer}

₁₄. sentences: sayings, sentiments, teachings

₁₅. well-delivered: well-spoken
If to do good were as easy as to know what were good to do,\(^{10}\) (then over-flowing of charity would turn) chapels into churches\(^{11}\) and poor men’s cottages into princely palaces.\(^{12}\) It is a good preacher who follows his own sermon.\(^{13}\) I could easier teach twenty others what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. \([\ldots]\) The brain may devise\(^{14}\) laws to control one’s passion\(^{15}\) but hot desire leaps o’er a cold decree. Such a hare is folly—[the] youth—that skips o’er the traps of good counsel—the cripple.\(^{15}\) But all this philosophy is not going to find me a husband of my choosing.\(^{16}\) O me, the word, choose: I may neither chose whom I would,\(^{16}\) nor refuse whom I dislike.\(^{17}\) So is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that there is none I can chose nor none I can refuse?\(^{18}\)\(^{19}\)

—Nerissa

Your father was ever-virtuous,\(^{o}\) and holy men nearing death have good inspirations.\(^{o}\) Therefore, the lottry that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, wherein the one who solves the riddle and chooses the right chest,\(^{o}\) and thereby chooses you, will no doubt, never be chosen rightly

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10. The sense here is that if doing good were as easy as knowing what were good to do—which it is not—than everyone would be doing good deeds, such as going to church and giving to the poor.

11. {chapels had been churches} / chapels would become churches; [as result of all those who gave in charity] poor men’s cottages would become princes’ palaces. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.25]

The images of this passage could be interpreted metaphorically (as opposed to literally). Hence: If to do good were as easy as to know what were good to do, then everyone would do good (and practice what they preach); by such truthful and honest actions, a meager person (a chapel) would become a person of great spiritual standing (a church) and a poor person (living in a poor man’s cottage) would become princely (living in a princely palace).

12. / . . . to hold all the worshipers | chapels would become churches;

13. {It is a good divine that follows his own instruction}

14. {a hot temper} / rash impulses / heated passion

15. {such a hare is madness, the youth, to skip over the meshes of good counsel, the cripple]

16. {But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband]

17. {I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike}

18. {that I cannot chose one nor refuse none?} / I cannot choose: Portia is powerless—she cannot choose; she is bound by her father’s conditions and yet—unlike the submissive fairy-tale princess—she is complaining about these fairy-tale conditions in a real way, secretly wishing there was something she could do to alter the situation. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.26]

19. chapels would be: [chapels had been]
by one whom you shall not rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that have already come?  

—Portia

I pray thee, name them once again; and as thou namest them, I shall describe them, and, in accord with my description, level (a guess) at my affection.

—Nerissa

First there is the Neapolitan prince.

—Portia

Ay, there’s a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he counts it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe the horse himself. I am much afeard, my lady, that his mother had a good ride upon the blacksmith!

—Neriss

Then there is the Count Palatine.

—Portia

Whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you; will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall love rightly. Whereof, the one who chooses the right chest, in accordance with the meaning of its inscription, wins you.

Nerissa is saying that the one who chooses the right chest (and wins Portia) will be one whom Portia rightly loves (and not necessarily the one who rightly loves Portia). Hence, the outcome of the lottery would be the same as if Portia had made her own choice—as she would choose herself a husband whom she rightly loved. So, the intent of the lottery is to deliver to Portia a man whom she truly loves—based upon the premise that she cannot make the choice through her own wits. Here Nerissa is assuring Portia of a positive and desired outcome of the lottery—contest in obeisance to her father’s wisdom—as it appears, that neither Portia nor Nerissa have real faith in this method. Later, we see, that Portia comes to rightly love Bassanio and thus she wishes that he choses the right casket—which he does. That side of the story is clear. The reverse position, however, is not so certain: does Bassanio rightly love Portia, does he selflessly love her—or is his chief aim to win her wealth.

20. {whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you; will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall love rightly.} / Whereof, the one who chooses the right chest, in accordance with the meaning of its inscription, wins you.

his meaning: your father’s meaning—i.e., the right chest, according to the meaning of its inscription.

meaning: the right chest according to the inscription on it

Nerissa is saying that the one who chooses the right chest (and wins Portia) will be one whom Portia rightly loves (and not necessarily the one who rightly loves Portia). Hence, the outcome of the lottery would be the same as if Portia had made her own choice—as she would choose herself a husband whom she rightly loved. So, the intent of the lottery is to deliver to Portia a man whom she truly loves—based upon the premise that she cannot make the choice through her own wits. Here Nerissa is assuring Portia of a positive and desired outcome of the lottery—contest in obeisance to her father’s wisdom—as it appears, that neither Portia nor Nerissa have real faith in this method. Later, we see, that Portia comes to rightly love Bassanio and thus she wishes that he choses the right casket—which he does. That side of the story is clear. The reverse position, however, is not so certain: does Bassanio rightly love Portia, does he selflessly love her—or is his chief aim to win her wealth.

21. ever virtuous: / a man of great virtue
earing death: {at their death}/ on their deathbed
good inspirations: / are well-inspired.
lott’ry: / lottery / contest / drawing
chooses the right chest: {chooses his meaning} / chooses the right chest (according to the meaning of its inscription)

already come: / since arrived?

22. {according to my description level at my affection.}

level at: guess at, infer, point to . . . the level of my response will be equal to—and on the same level as—my affection.

23. / he counts it as some great virtue

24. {and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself.}

/ and he calls attention to his own good breeding that he can shoe the horse himself

/ and he is quick to endorse (/commend) his own talent in that he can shoe the horse himself

/ and he claims himself worthy of some prize (/commendation) in that he can shoe the horse himself.

25. {his mother played false with a smith}

/ his mother fooled ‘round with a blacksmith / his mother had a long ride on the blacksmith

In this rather bawdy remark, Portia is saying that he loves horses, and is able to shoe his own horse, because his mother (played false with) slept with a blacksmith behind his father’s back; thus his father was a blacksmith and not a nobleman.

26. {his mother played false with a smith}

/ his mother fooled ‘round with a blacksmith / his mother had a long ride on the blacksmith

In this rather bawdy remark, Portia is saying that he loves horses, and is able to shoe his own horse, because his mother (played false with) slept with a blacksmith behind his father’s back; thus his father was a blacksmith and not a nobleman.

27. colt: unruly youth
good parts: / talent / qualities / virtue

appropriation to: / addition to / endorsement of / a prize of / a trophy to / a testament of / ‘a blue ribbon’ to
He does nothing but frown (all day), as if to say: ‘You would rather not have me choose.’

He courts sadness and that is what he finds. He hears a merry tale yet does not smile. I fear he will prove (himself to be) the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I would rather be married to a skull with a bone in its mouth than to either of these.

God protect me from these two!

—Nerissa

What say you of the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

—Portia

God made him so, therefore, let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but he!—why he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan’s and a frown more formidable than the Count Palantine. As he is no one, he tries to be everyone. At the song of a sparrow, he dances straight-away like a puppet. Afraid of his own shadow, he draws a sword to fight with it. If I should marry him, I’d have to marry twenty of him to have one husband. If he would reject me I would return the favor; but should he fall madly in love with me, that I shall never requite.

—Nerissa

What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

—Portia

You know I say nothing to him, for he understands me not, nor I him. He speaks neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and, as you would swear in court, I have a poor penny’s worth of English.

28. (He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, ‘And you will not have me choose.’)

29. the weeping philosopher: refers to Heraclitus, who lived about 500 B.C., and was known to weep at the sad condition of humanity

30. / so besieged by the sadness of his youth / entombed in sadness from his early youth / so inclined to sadness since his youth.

31. {I’d rather be married to a death’s-head with a bone in his mouth} — I’d rather be dead

32. unmannerly: unfortunate / unbecoming / misappropriated / unbridled / unseemly — not fit for a youth

33. prove (himself to be): {prove} / prove (himself); / prove (to be)

34. protect: {defend} / rescue / save

35. / What do you think of

36. (a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine)

37. {He is every man in no man.} / As he is no one (in himself), he must try to be everyone else. / He seems to be everyone but himself.

This line is open to several interpretations: a) as he is no one (having no character of his own) he tries to be like everyone else, to take on the traits and characteristics of those around him; b) as he is no one (and feeling inferior to those around him) he tries to impress and to look better than everyone—more of a horseman than the Neapolitan, more of a sad character than the Count. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.58]

38. {If a trassell sing, he falls straight a cap’ring}

trassell: / thrrostle / thrush — falls straight: begins straight away / starts right away a cap’ring: merrily jumping about, gayly dancing, frolicking / convulsing in fright

/ he suddenly convulses with fear / he immediately begins shaking / he straight away begins to dance.

The exact meaning of a cap’ring is unclear. It could mean a) that the moment he hears the sound of a bird he begins to dance about, suggesting that he is like a puppet and dances to everyone else’s tune—but not his own. (It could also be that he is so eager to show off his dancing skills, that the moment a bird sings he will take that as his opportunity to dance); b) when he hears the song of a bird, a thrrostle sing, he falls to the ground in a frenzy—so lacking in manhood and courage that even the sound of bird can cause him to shiver in fright.

39. {If he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.}

40. a-shaking: {a cap’ring} / cowers / shivers / convulses fence: / duel / battle / do battle reject: {despise} return the favor: {forgive him} / give him the same
He is the picture of a proper man—but alas, who can converse with a picture? And how oddly he is suited! I think he got his jacket in Italy, his stockings in France, his round hat in Germany, and his behavior from who knows where?

—Nerissa

How do you like the young German, nephew to the Duke of Saxony?

—Portia

With much vile in the morning when he is sober; and with great vile in the afternoon when he is drunk. When he is best, he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast. Should the worst fate that ever fell, now fall, (and I ne’er see his face again), I hope I shall make do to live without him.

—Nerissa

If he should decide to choose, and should he choose the right casket—you would refuse to perform your father’s will should you refuse to accept him.

—Portia

’Tis a fate of which I am well aware. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a full glass of fine wine on the contrary casket; for if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will chose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

[Enter a Servingman; Nerissa meets with him. Servingman exits.]

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41. {dumb-show} / pantomime / ‘someone in a silent show’
42. {doublet} / suit (double-breasted suit) / vest / referring to a tight-fitting upper garment
43. {and his behaviour everywhere} / from who knows where.
44. {and his behaviour everywhere} / manners / mannerisms / affection
45. Found here in the original is an obscure reference to a Scottish Lord. For the sake of brevity and clarity it has herein been deleted. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.75]
46. {very vilely} / with disgust / with much vile
47. {most vilely} / with loathing
48. {make do} / {make shift} / make the needed adjustments
49. / A thing of which I am too well aware.
50. / to prevent my worst fears from coming true
51. ‘I will do anything,’ says Portia—anything short of going directly against her father’s will. In her playful suggestion that Nerissa dupe the German suitor into picking the wrong casket, Portia is expressing her unconscious wish that Nerissa somehow intervene (and rig the lottery such that Portia will end up with someone she truly loves). Nerissa, as a loyal servant, may feel the need to act upon this unspoken wish and alter the outcome of lottery in favor of Portia’s choice (without Portia ever asking her to do so). Thus, Portia can have her wish and remain faithful to her father’s will. We can infer from this passage that both Portia and Nerissa know which is the winning casket.
52. {full} / deep / white: {Rhenish} / a fine, white German wine, superior to the common table wine, which is red
53. {contrary} / wrong / drunkard: {sponge} / sop / one who soaks up liquor like a sponge
54. In the original, no Servant enters in to bring news (from the suitors) and Nerissa’s next line reads: You need not fear, lady, the having of any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeed to return to their home.’ This indicates that the lords had informed Nerissa about their intention to leave before the scene opened. One way to rectify this situation would be to have a Servant enter with the news of the suitors’ departure.

[See Additional Notes, 1.2.96]
—Nerissa
You need not fear lady in having any of these lords. They have all come to the same decision, which is indeed to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some means other than your father’s condition of having to choose the right casket.

—Portia
If I live a thousand years, as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana unless I be obtained by the manner of my father’s will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable in deciding to depart for there is not one among them, whose very absence I do not dote upon— and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

—Nerissa
Do you not remember, lady, in your father’s time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in the company of Marquis of Montferrat?

—Portia
Yes, yes, it was Bassanio— as I think so was he called.

—Nerissa
True, madam. He, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the most deserving of a fair lady.

—Portia
I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.
Enter a Servant

—Servant

The four foreigners seek for you, madam, to take their leave—and there is a messenger come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the Prince, his master, will be here tonight.

messenger: [forerunner] / herald from: / to announce

—Portia

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. And if he has the temperament of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I’d rather he hear me confess my strife than take me as a wife.

Come now Nerissa, ‘tis just like before:

Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer

Then comes another to knock at my door.

Exeunt

63. The following line by Portia, which appears here in Q1 {How now! What news?} has been deleted; Most commentators hold that this line is superfluous and out of place: Portia is not likely to greet her servant in such a way. This line is omitted in F1.

If the Servant is made to enter before [line 96] then this short greeting might come as a result of Portia’s surprise—and perhaps in slight apprehension that there is some additional news that is contrary to the good news previously delivered (which is that all the suitors intend to leave). If, however, this line is preserved (and if, the Servant had come once before) then Portia’s line would read: ‘How now, more news?

64. [four strangers] Actually, six suitors are named in the original, and the mention of four is probably a remnant of an earlier draft. As discussed in a previous note, it is likely that the original scene had only four suitors, with the Englishman and Scottish suitors added in a later draft. Several references to four suitors—and a reference to a fifth, who comes after the four—are made by Portia.

One could rectify this discrepancy by a) changing all references to four to six, and the reference to a fifth, to a seventh (which is somewhat cumbersome); b) changing the references to five suitors and a sixth (and delete the Scottish suitor), or c) leaving the references as they are, to four (and delete the English and Scottish suitors). One could also leave the inaccurate references as they are, without harming to the text. In this version, five suitors are named yet the reference remains at four suitors—the implication could be that the French suitor is not extant enough to be counted as a suitor.

65. [with so good heart] /as whole-heartedly / with the same affection

66. [if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil]

comment: /virtue / character / temperament / affection

the complexion of: / the dark color of / the dark skin of

67. [I had rather he should shrive me than wive me]

> If he has the dark complexion like the devil—and recall that fairness or lightness of skin was considered beautiful at the time—and the disposition of a saint, I would rather that he be my priest, and hear my confession (shrive me), than marry me (wive me). Hear we see that Portia is quick to judge by outer show, by what meets the eye, rather than the deeper meaning or character of a person.

shrive me: hear my confession, absolve me of my sins (as would a priest) > the precise meaning is uncertain

/ I had rather he absolve me of my sin, then wive me herein

68. [Come Nerissa, sirrah, go before]

sirrah: a term used to address someone of low standing, such as a servant, or a boy. To clarify this line, it is often emended as follows: “Come Nerissa. (to Servant) Sirrah, go before.”

69. [Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer]

wooer: in the original, wooer may have rhymed with before and door, and provided for a triplicate rhyme scheme.

71. In the original, the meter of the rhyming lines is not in the standard iambic meter; the second line has nine syllables and the third, has seven. If a triplicate rhyme was intended, then the third line would contain nine syllables and could be emended as follows: ‘Another suitor knocks at the door’ or ‘Another comes to knock at my door.’
ACT ONE - Scene Three  1.3

Venice. Enter Bassanio and Shylock.

—Shylock
Three thousand ducats—yes? \footnote{Three thousand ducats, well} / good / alright

—Bassanio
Ay sir, for three months.

—Shylock
For three months—yes? \footnote{well} / good / alright

—Bassanio
For which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound. \footnote{shall be bound: shall cover the loan, shall sign the bond}

—Shylock
Antonio shall be bound—yes? \footnote{become} // {well} / good / alright

—Bassanio
Can you help me? \footnote{May you stead me? / Can you cover me? / Can you supply the money for me?} Will you do me this favor? \footnote{Will you pleasure me? / Will you meet my needs? / Will you please me with your reply? / Will you fulfill my request?} Shall I know your answer? \footnote{Shall you say, ‘yes’? / Shall your answer be ‘yes’? / What is your answer?}

—Shylock
Three thousand ducats, for three months, and Antonio bound.

—Bassanio
Your answer to that?

—Shylock
Antonio is a good man.

\footnote{1. \textbf{ducats}: (lit., ‘of the duke’); gold coins. These were first struck in Venice in the thirteenth century and came to signify a well-respected currency (such as the South African Kugerrand does today). Three thousand ducats, during that time, was an extremely large sum of money. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.1]

2. \{Three thousand ducats, well\}

\textbf{well}: good / alright / OK // yes? / is that right?

The repeated use of the term, ‘yes?’ or ‘good’ after each condition would be like a person going over a checklist and acknowledging that the stated condition is clear and understood—and agreed upon. If the term \textit{good} is used, it would be spoken three times, in the same matter-of-fact style as one going over a checklist. The term \textit{well}, which is found in the original, is an imprecise fit. Many productions, in trying to make the term \textit{well} sound somewhat ‘natural,’ have added different inflections and tonalities to it; and instead of the term being repeated in the same way, with the same tone, each time the word \{well\} is intoned as a question, a note of surprise, a sense of disbelief, etc.

3. \textbf{shall be bound}: shall cover the loan, shall sign the bond

4. \{May you stead me? \} / Can you cover me? / Can you supply the money for me?

5. \{Will you pleasure me? \} / Will you meet my needs? / Will you please me with your reply? / Will you fulfill my request?

6. Shall you say, ‘yes’? / Shall your answer be ‘yes’? / What is your answer?}
—Bassanio
Have you ever heard any imputation⁰ to the contrary? / accusation / charge

—Shylock
Oh, no, no, no, no. What I mean in saying, ‘he is a good man’ is to have you understand that he is sufficient (to cover the loan). Yet his means⁰ are in question.⁰ He hath an argosy⁰ bound for Tripolis,⁰ another to the Indies. I understand, moreover, from word on⁰ the Rialto⁰ he hath a third at Mexico, a forth for England, and other ventures he hath scattered about.⁰⁹ Yet ships are but boards, sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, land thieves and water thieves—I mean pi-rates.¹⁰ And then there is the peril of the water, wind, and rocks. The man is nonetheless sufficient.¹¹ Three thousand ducats—I think I may take his bond.¹²

—Bassanio
Be assured you may.⁰ / With assurance you may

—Shylock
I will be assured I may; and that I may be assured, I will think it over.¹³ May I speak with Antonio?¹⁴

—Bassanio
If it please you to⁰ dine with us. / come

—Shylock
Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the swine which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil

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⁰ {upon} / from news on / as heard upon / upon word at
⁰ {squandered abroad} / extended abroad / flung about / at risk in foreign waters / ‘scattered recklessly’ (Onions). Squander in this context does not carry the negative connotation of being ‘wasteful’ but pertains more to a sense of ‘over-reaching.’
⁰ There is no factual accuracy in this description, as no merchant of Venice would have such a varied range of ventures. This long description serves to show Antonio’s standing as a grand merchant, and also to show that Shylock is well aware of everything concerning Antonio and his ventures.
⁰ The original reads {there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves—I mean pirates.} Pirates may be a ‘bad’ pun for pier-rats, which would indicate the rats which run about the pier and steal food. In this emendation the terms land thieves and water thieves have been reversed. With this new order the term pirates is clearly related to water-thieves. (The pun on pirates could also be made by the following word order: “There be land rats and land thieves, water rats and water thieves—I mean pirates.” In some productions the term pirates is pronounced as pi-rats. The reason for this emphasis is uncertain but it may be a word play on “water rats.” It could also indicate “pie-rats,” i.e., petty thieves who steal crumbs (as rats steal the crumbs from pies). The emphasis in this phrase is not particularly strong.)
¹¹ is sufficient: has adequate wealth (and means) to cover the debt
¹² his means: his business, his ventures, his means of making money
   in question: {in supposition} / in doubt / questionable
   an argosy: a merchant ship
   Tripolis: a port in Libya or Lebanon
   Rialto: merchant exchange in Venice
   nonetheless: {notwithstanding} / nevertheless / despite all that
¹³ {I will bethink me}
¹⁴ Shylock already knows Antonio’s store and need not think it over {I will bethink me} to be assured; nor does he need to discuss anything with Antonio to be assured. As we will see, none of the subsequent conversation with Antonio lead’s to Shylock’s further assurance as he never once asks Antonio about the state of his ventures (or other collateral that Antonio may have). Shylock is using this notion of needing to be assured as a rouse whereby he can speak directly with Antonio both from a position of equals and from the position of superiority, where Antonio needs his help. Shylock is taking this rare opportunity of engagement to confront Antonio about personal matters—such as Antonio’s mistreatment of Shylock.
I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so forth—but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. [What news on the Rialto. \(^{16}\) Who is he comes here? \(^{17}\)

Enter Antonio

—Bassanio

This is Signior Antonio.

[\textit{Bassanio goes over to Antonio and they converse in private.}] \(^{18}\)

—Shylock [aside]

How like a fawning\(^{o}\) innkeeper\(^{o}\) he looks\(^{o}\) \(^{19}\) / slavish // \{publican\}

\langle Ever so keen to be of humble service,\rangle\(^{o}\) / Ever so willing to help those is need

How I despise his meddling\(^{o}\) Christian virtue \(^{22}\) / holy / feignèd

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15. Sometimes this line is staged as an ‘aside,’ rather than a direct comment (and insult) to Bassanio. Reference is to Jesus of Nazareth who conjured a demon out of two men and cast it into a herd of pigs (Matthew 8:28-33); or to the story where Jesus cast out unclean spirits from a man named Legion into a herd of pigs (Mark 5:1-13). In both stories the bedeviled pigs were driven off a cliff into the sea.

16. In Q1, this line appears as follows: {What news on the Rialto, who is he comes here?} Most editions punctuate it as follows: “What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?” Shylock could not be asking Bassanio about news on the Rialto since Bassanio has no knowledge of what is happening there. It could be that Shylock is asking this question to himself. Or, in a possible staging, Shylock could see a fellow merchant and instinctively ask him about news on the Rialto—and then notice Antonio’s arrival. This, however, would require the scene to be staged in a market with additional characters on stage. But, is this really a question that Shylock asks? Perhaps not. The preferred option, then, would be to treat this line as an exclamatory statement not a question. When Shylock sees Antonio he says something to the effect of: “What great news (on the Rialto)! Here comes Antonio.” If, however, none of these options work, and the line is seen as being too obscure and confusing, it could simply be deleted.

17. \textit{swine:} / pigs [habitation] > dwelling place \textit{so forth:} {following}

18. Bassanio is likely unaware of Antonio’s hatred of Shylock and all the railing he has done against Shylock over the years. We know that Antonio despises usurers and here, through necessity, we find him thrust into a usurer’s domain. Antonio cannot be pleased with the situation yet, for the love of his friend, he is willing to endure this unfortunate convergence. (Without understanding Antonio’s hatred of usury—and now seeing him thrust into the liar of one whose practice he despises—the scene would fail to hold the tension that was intended by the author, a tension surely felt and understood by an Elizabethan audience.)

19. \{How like a fawning publican he looks\} / How like a slavish innkeeper he looks

\langle How like an ever-eager servant\rangle he looks / inn-keeper

\textbf{fawning:} humble, cowering, accommodating, obsequious

\textbf{publican:} innkeeper, ‘pub-keeper. Sharing similar roots with: \textit{pub} and \textit{public}.

A \textit{fawning publican} refers to an obsequious and ‘ever-ready-to-serve’ inn- or bar-keeper. The image here is that of Antonio, the well-respected ‘royal merchant’ who now looks like a lowly innkeeper ready to accommodate the needs of his friend. There is something about this all-too-willing posture that is alien to Shylock and both offends and threatens his concept of life. A publican could also be a reference to those who served as tax-collectors for the Romans [Luke 18:9-14]—and in so doing oppressed the Jews, but this is a more remote possibility. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.38]

22. {I hate him for he is a Christian}

This is a highly controversial line which, as it stands, seems to portray Shylock as a Christian-hater. What Shylock hates is not Christians per se but something about Antonio and his Christian charity, which undermines Shylock’s business. Some productions, in trying to put forth a pro-Shylock sentiment, delete this line (and the entire section), and preserve only the first line. {How like a fawning publican he looks}. When this line about Shylock’s hatred is taken at face value (and without the reasons offered by Shylock in later lines) it might suggest that Shylock hates Antonio for no other reason than his being Christian—which is clearly not the case. (Shylock makes no such negative comment about Bassanio or any other Christian—in or has reason to.) Shylock hates something about Antonio’s version and practice of Christianity (especially as it interferes with Shylock’s business) but also, personally, as Antonio rails at Shylock (where the merchants meet) and spits on him and calls him a dog. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.39]
But more, for that in low simplicity, for in his simple-mindedness, he lends out money gratis and brings down the rate of usance here with us in Venice. If I can gain an upper hand but once, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him. He hates our sacred nation; and even where merchants most do congregate he rails on me, my contracts, and my well-won profit, which he calls, usury. Cursed be my tribe.

If I forgive him.

[Bassanio returns while Antonio hesitates, coming over after a brief pause.]

—Bassanio Shylock, do you hear?

—Shylock

I am considering my present store, and by the near guess of my memory, I cannot instantly raise up the gross of full three thousand ducats. What of that?

23. {But more, for in low simplicity} / But more his simple-minded view, wherein low simplicity: naivety and ignorance

24. rate of usance: the profit that can be gained from usance, especially as it relates to exacting large penalties from a forfeited bond. This is not the same as bringing down the rate of interest. The sense here is that Shylock hates something about Antonio’s version of Christianity, and his Christian actions, where he is quick to loan out money, without interest, to those in need; this action cuts into Shylock’s profits. “Bringing down the rate of usance” is not the same as “bringing down the rate of interest.” Shylock biggest complaint is not that Antonio brings down the interest rate but that Antonio brings down the value of Shylock’s usance. He does this in two ways: he lends out money, gratis, and thereby deprives Shyock of potential customers, but more so he loans out money, gratis, so people do not forfeit the bond they made with Shylock and thereby avoid paying the exhorbitant fine—which often results in the forfeit of all their goods.

25. catch him upon the hip: a wrestling term that means to grab hold of or gain advantage over one’s opponent; to be in a superior position.

26. feed fat: indulge in, stuff oneself Shylock is hoping to find a way to entrap Antonio, to gain an advantage over him, then to use that position of power to exploit or “feed fat” his long-standing resentment, i.e., finally get some revenge. Feeding fat indicates that Shylock will take delight in, and indulge in, his position of power, or advantage, over Antonio and the revenge he exacts.

27. well-won thrift: Shylock couches his ruinous practice of usury as ‘thrift.’

28. Which he calls usury: which Antonio views as thievery, exploitation, the devil’s work, etc. Shylock is defending his business and profits (thrif) as being well-earned and justifiable.

Cursed be my tribe | If I forgive him:

Shylock is invoking something larger than himself in his effort to reinforce his resolve to enact some kind of revenge on Antonio. Here he lays the curse upon his tribe (not himself) should he forgive Antonio. By cursing his tribe (the nation of Jews) Shylock may be implying that Antonio’s hatred of usury is the same as his hatred of Judaism, but this is not the case. This statement may not be directed toward Shylock’s tribe but may be seen as a general exclamation akin to “Cursed be God if I forgive him” or “God be damned if I forgive him.”
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe, 29
Will furnish me. But wait! How many months [soft]
Do you desire? 30 [To Antonio] Rest you fair, good signior
Your worship was the last man in our mouths. 31 / on our breath

—Antonio
Shylock, although° I neither lend nor borrow [albeit]
By taking nor by giving with interest° [of excess]
Yet to supply the ripe° needs° of my friend / ready / pressing / urgent {wants}
I’ll break a custom. 32 33 [to Bas.] Does he know the amount,° [Is he yet possessed]
How much you want?

—Shylock Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

—Antonio
And for three months.

—Shylock
I had forgot—three months. [to Bassanio] You told me so. 34
Well then, your bond. And let me see. . . .° But hear you: / and now the rate
Methought° you said you neither lend nor borrow / I thought
On sums that bear interest.° [upon advantage]

—Antonio I never do.° [I never use it] > engage in such activity

—Shylock
When Jacob grazed° his uncle Laban’s sheep / tended

29. Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe:
Shylock only mentions Tubal and expresses doubt about having the full sum after he sees Antonio enter. Here he is simply stalling, waiting for Antonio to come over. (Once Antonio agrees to the terms of the bond, we hear that Shylock is going to purse the ducats straight [171] which suggests that he had ample store from the beginning.)
30. Shylock knows full well that the bond is for three months, as he has already stated it twice. Again, he is just stalling, waiting for Antonio.
31. Shylock’s words are most gracious, generously welcoming of Antonio, and appear to be a true offer of friendship—which Antonio is now inclined (or obligated) to accept since he is in need of Shylock’s help. Yet Antonio may see this overtly warm welcome as just another usurer’s rouse, a pretense of friendship only offered to gain an advantage. Hence, Antonio neither accepts the welcome nor returns it. Antonio refuses to befriend a usurer. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.57]
32. I’ll break a custom to supply the ripe | Wants of my friend.
33. Antonio’s first words to Shylock—without even so much as a greeting—are an outright rejection of Shylock and his business. Antonio is in need of Shylock’s money yet Antonio wants to make it clear, from the onset, that he is doing this out of duress, as an exception—and still upholds his harsh opinion of usury. Shylock, of course, is ready to expose, and use Antonio’s predicament to his advantage, to entrap Antonio.
34. Shylock definitely did not forget that the term of the bond was for three months. He is again stalling. He wants to get back to the real issue, which his opportunity to confront Antonio.
He then was third in line from Abraham—\(^35\)
This, his wise mother, had deftly arranged;
The third possessor—ay, he was the third.\(^36\)

—Antonio
And what of it? Did he take interest?

—Shylock
No, not directly—hear what Jacob did:
He first agreed with Laban, that for earnings,\(^0\)
He could have all the sheep born marked\(^0\) or spotted.
‘Tis known, whatever a ewe sees when mating
That’s what her newborn will come to resemble.
Autumn\(^\circ\) had come; it was the time for breeding.
So Jacob peeled off the bark from some sticks
And when the work of generations was
Between these wooly breeders in the act
He put the branches in front of the ewes.
In spring they conceived lambs that were spotted
And all the offspring rightly went to Jacob.\(^38\)
This was the way he thrived, and he was blessed;
And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.\(^39\)

\(^35\). Abraham. The Author uses the original name, Abram, which means ‘exalted father’ rather than Abraham which means, ‘father of many nations,’ because the biblical account he refers to uses the name Abram, not Abraham. Abram received the name Abraham from God when he was 99 years old.

\(^36\). {This Jacob from our holy Abram was, | As his wise mother wrought in his behalf, | The third possessor—ay, he was the third}
Jacob was made third in line through the cleverness (and deception) of his mother, Rebecca, who substituted Jacob for Esau, her elder son, so that Jacob would received Isaac’s blessing and inheritance (making him third in line from Abraham) rather than Esau, who rightly deserved it. (This deception is what Shylock calls a ‘wise’ action.) Shylock is thus justifying his deceptive practice of usury by citing a Biblical precedence of deception. Shylock then goes on to tell how Jacob deceived Laban and thereby prospered. Both stories are used by Shylock to justify his deceptive practice of usury, which he calls ‘thrift’ and ‘blessing.’ Antonio does not “buy” this explanation; to the contrary, he is appalled at the way Shylock misquotes and abuses scripture in support of his own immoral practices. [See Additional Note, 1.3.71]

\(^37\)/ He first agreed with Laban that all sheep
‘Found pied or spotted,’ Jacob, for his earnings, / born with streaks or spots
Could keep. What e’er a ewe sees when she mates

\(^38\). Shylock cites this story in support of Jacob’s wise actions which allowed him to prosper. Antonio says that the spots were brought about by ‘the hand of heaven’—in accordance with divine dispensation (impelled by Jacob’s purity and faith). This was done so that Jacob could prosper after having been deceived by Laban.

\(^39\). {And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.} Shylock is again using the euphemistic term “thrift” [see note 27] to justify his harmful practice of usury.

/ Such thrift is seen as a blessing, if men | Gain it through cleverness and not through theft.
This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for,
A thing not in his power to bring to pass
But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven

(Which naturally allows all creatures to breed—
The same of which does not apply to gold.

Was this inserted to justify usury?

Or is your gold and wealth like Jacob’s sheep?

I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.

---Shylock

But hear me, signor—

---Antonio

A line could be added here: (Your story tells of human trickery: This line would show that Shylock’s version of the story is based upon that which pertains to human deception not the hand of God.

Here Antonio is pointing out that Jacob worked for the sheep, that he earned them from the sweat of his brow (both in tending the sheep and serving his uncle). The part of the story that Shylock and Antonio shy away from—including the prelude story where Jacob deceives Isaac and gains his land—is that Jacob used deception to gain Laban’s sheep.

swayed: determined, directed, shaped
fashioned: brought about, created, produced
the hand of heaven: God

Such ‘a thing’—i.e., the creation and reproduction of life—is only in the power of God to bring to pass. As such, the reproduction of money is unnatural and contrary to the natural laws of God, and what God brings to pass. Thus, Antonio is refuting Shylock’s story (and its justification for his business) on two accounts: a) that Jacob earned the money by working for it, and b) that the hand of heaven—not Jacob’s own power and skill—allowed Jacob to prosper through the power by which animals naturally reproduce. Antonio is saying that the reproduction of money—where money reproduces on its own, through the charging of interest on a loan—is unnatural, Godless, and cannot be compared to Jacob’s venture. (Some scholars argue that this also goes against Jewish law in that the money earns interest, or “creates,” on the Sabbath).

For living creatures are sanctioned by God | To breed—and such does not apply to gold.

Which allows creatures to naturally breed— Such laws as these do not apply to money.

[See Additional Notes, 1.3.90]

Was this inserted to make interest good? / Was this a story in defense (/support) of usury?

was this inserted: was this story, this biblical reference inserted into our conversation

interest: Antonio uses the term interest (which means the practice of loaning out money which carries interest) but he is using it to implicate the practice of usury—a practice that involves loaning out money with interest but, more villainously, this loan often involved a stiff penalty or forfeiture if the loan is not repaid in time; and this whole practice also involves some measure of deception, exploitation, and entrapment. Usury is something far more nefarious than the simple loaning out money with interest. We see this displayed in the bond that Antonio made with Shylock where, as it turns out, Antonio had to pay with his life as a forfeiture on the loan.

Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams? / Or does your gold and silver breed like sheep?

This relates to the Augustinian argument (previously invoked by Antonio) that the loaning of money, which bears interest, is an unnatural act and goes against God’s law since only living things have God’s sanction to reproduce. Loaning money which bears interest causes barren metal (gold and silver) to breed like living things.

What was Shylock going to say before he was interrupted? Clearly he is derailed by Antonio’s harsh comments—or perhaps by some extraneous distraction, such as the knocking over of some money or some paper on his table. In the next line Shylock composes himself by stating something obvious and bland {Three thousand ducats, ’tis a nice round sum} then he regains his previous line of thought—where he expresses his deep resentment at the way Antonio has treated him. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.93]
—Antonio
Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness® 47 / that cites the holy books
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek.
A goodly° apple48 rotten at the heart.° 49 / shiny // to the core
O, what a godly outside falsehood hath! 50 {goodly} / tempting
〈 [aside] Of all the men in Venice, could you not
〈Find a one but this most vile usurer? 〉 51

—Shylock
Three thousand ducats. ‘Tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; now,° let me see the rate. . . . [then]

—Antonio
Well, Shylock, shall we be indebted° to you? {beholding} / beholden

—Shylock
Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you berated° me,
About my monies° and my usances— / business
Still I have borne it with a patient shrug,

47. witness: accounts, testaments, evidence (to support his evil views)
48. {goodly} > appearing good on the outside
49. Antonio’s harsh words reflect his true feelings—which he is not able to hold back—even though such an outburst might jeopardize Bassanio’s chances of getting the loan. To show a more level-headed Antonio, this part of the scene could be staged such that Shylock is about to say something but then knocks over something by mistake. As he is picking things up, Antonio could deliver this vitriole as an ‘aside’ to Bassanio.
50. / O, how these lies are wrapped in good appearance. / Oh what a good appearance falsehood wears!
51. These lines could be added to reveal Antonio’s disgust at having to deal with a vile usurer, and also reaffirm that his hatred is toward the usurers not Jews.

To more forcefully show Antonio’s position, and specifically show that his hatred against Shylock is in regard to his practice of usury and not his Jewishness, Antonio could praise the Jews while pointing out that Shylock’s actions are at odds with those of his own people. Thus, the following lines could be added instead:
〈Now here is one who serves his own interest | And thus befoils the honor of his own people. 〉
For sufferance is the badge⁵² of all my people.⁵² / mark, sign > hallmark {tribe}
You call me misbeliever,⁵³ cut-throat,⁵⁴ dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.

Well then,⁰ it now appears you need my help— / Well, well
To hell with that!⁵⁵ You come to me and say:
‗Shylock, we wish for⁰ monies.'⁰ You say so— / Well spit on that!
You that did void your rheum⁰ upon my beard⁰
And kick me as you‘d spurn a worthless dog⁰
Over your doorway.⁰ Now you ask for money;⁵⁶
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
‗Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur⁰ can lend three thousand ducats?’ Or
Shall I bend low, and in a servant’s voice,⁰
With bated breath and whimpering⁰ humbleness,
Say this: ‘Fair⁰ sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last—
You spurned me such a day. Another time
You called me ‘dog’—and for these courtesies
I‘ll lend you thus much monies’?

—Antonio
I am as like⁰ to call thee so again, / And I am wont

---

⁵² {For suff’rance is the badge of all our tribe}
  suff’rance: forbearance, patient endurance (of abuse), long-suffering.
  the badge of our tribe: refers to the distinguishing trait of Jews which is their ability to endure the hardship piled upon
  them by Christian oppression. It could also refer to the badge, a distinguishing yellow ‘O,’ that Venetian Jews were
  compelled to wear. In 1.3, the term tribe, designating the nation of Jews, is used by Shylock three times: cursèd be my
  tribe [1.3.48]; a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe [1.3.54]; sufferance is the badge of our tribe [1.3.107]. The term, however, is
  odd and it is unlikely that a Jew would refer to the nation of Jews by that term.
⁵³ misbeliever: infidel; one who believes in a mistaken God or path to salvation—as opposed to a ‘disbeliever’ which
  refers to one who has no belief in God.
⁵⁴ cut-throat: one who cuts the throat of others, a murderer. The terms would refer to the usurer who cuts the throat of, or
  kills, the livelihood of others.
⁵⁵ {Go to, then; you come to me and you say}
  go to: an expression of annoyance and disbelief which, in some cases, could mean something like ‘go to hell.’ It could
  be more vaguely, and less forcefully, expressed as: ‘come on now,’ ‘you must be kidding,’ or ‘what’s up with that?’ The
  forceful expression of ‘go to hell’ (or ‘get lost’) serves to prompt Antonio into anger, into a storm—which works to
  Shylock’s advantage—whereas ‘go to, then’ ‘come on now,’ is less prompting in its effect.
⁵⁶ {Over your threshold, monies is your suit.} / Outside your house; now money is your suit.
⁵⁷ {in a bondman’s key}
  bondman’s key: sounding like, with the voice of, in the feeble tone of a serf or servant (bondman).
⁵⁸ / With a gentle breath and a humble whisper
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too. ⁵⁹ ⁶⁰
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not⁰ / don’t lend it
As to thy friend—for when did friendship make⁰ [take]
Profit⁰ on barren metal. ⁶¹ {breeding it / Interest
Unnaturally, as if a living creature?} ⁶² / as one would
Nay,⁰ lend it rather to thine enemy {But
Who, if he breaks, thou may’st with better⁰ face / sterner / rigid
Exact⁰ the penalty. / Demand

—Shylock  Why look how you storm! ⁶³
I would be friends with you and have your love,⁰ / favor / grace
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no drop⁰ {no doit} / no hint
Of interest⁰ for my monies ⁶⁴ —and you’ll not hear me. ⁶⁵ {usance} / profit

⁵⁹. Antonio’s likely response, being that he is in need of Shylock’s help, might be to pay Shylock the lip-service he desires. But Antonio refuses to acknowledge his mistreatment of Shylock or apologize for it—even though such an apology would better his chances to help Bassanio. Antonio is willing to give up his life for Bassanio but he is not willing to treat Shylock as an equal or approve of any mixture of usury or usurer, such is Antonio’s unmitigated abhorrence with regards to usurers and their practice.

       The scene could be staged such that Bassanio intervenes (for his own benefit, to insure that the loan is not jeopardized) by pulling Antonio aside to try and calm him down.

⁶⁰. To add fuel to the fire of Antonio’s rage—which might be seen as an extension of his opening lines about usury—the following four or six lines could be added here:

       ⟨And every usurer as well! They cheat,⁰ / You beguile
And cozen men of their rightful possessions / out of their livelihood
Leaving them hapless and in total ruin.
You call this ‘thrift,’ though it be none but theft.⁰⟩ / I say it is thievery
⟨This banefulpractice of usury affronts / harmful / sinful / wretched
All that is righteous in the eyes of God.⟩

       This passage indicates the true grievance Antonio has against Shylock—which involves his ruinous practice of usury, not his Jewishness. Earlier, however, Shylock is quick to implicate Antonio’s hatred as being that against Jews (as opposed to a usurers), saying: ‘He hates our sacred nation’ [1.3.45]. Obviously Shylock is mistaken in this regard. Usury was seen as an ‘ungodly’ practice which often led to the loss of all one’s wealth and property—and that is why the good Antonio was so adamantly set against it. Most usurers were Jews so Antonio’s hatred for usurers could easily be misconstrued as a hatred for all Jews. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.127]

⁶¹. {As to thy friends, for when did friendship take | A breed for barren metal of his friend?}

       breed: offspring. Charging interest on a loan (i.e., making money from money, producing ‘offspring’ from barren metal) was viewed as unnatural (and going against divine law); money, made out of metal, cannot naturally breed and multiply like a living thing. Jews, at the time, could not own property and loaning of money, with interest, was one of the few ways they could earn a profit. Some argue that the charging of a full seven days of interest (per week) went against the laws of the Sabbath since one’s money was ‘working’ and ‘creating’ on the day when man was commanded to rest.

⁶². / … for when did friendship breed | Barren metal (as ‘were a living thing?’ | Such a perversion goes against nature.) / … for when did friendship charge | Interest on barren metal (as if it were | The offspring of a living creature?)

⁶³. {Why look you how you storm?}

       The line, as it appears in Q1, is somewhat awkward, in that it repeats the term you twice and contains 6 + 6 iambs (instead of 4 + 6). Both suggest some kind of error in the text or typesetting.

⁶⁴. {And take no doit | Of profit for my monies} / And take no drop | Of usance for my monies

⁶⁵. You’ll not hear me: this could mean: and you will not hear my offer, my proposal (for the loan). More deeply, it could mean: and you will not hear me, you will not accept me as a person, as an equal, as a friend. Antonio never ‘sees’ or ‘hears’ Shylock as a person; likewise, when Shylock has power over Antonio, he refuses to hear him: [Ant: I pray thee, hear me speak. Shy: I’ll have my bond: I will not hear thee speak. 3.3.11-12]

       Antonio will not hear Shylock because he does not believe in the sincerity of his offer; he sees this charm, this pretense of friendship, as a ruse, as the deceit that usurers use to gain the trust of, and then entrap, their victims. Thus, Antonio will have no part of this. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.137]
This is kind I offer.\(^{66}\)

—Bassanio

This were\(^{67}\) kindness. / is / would be / is

—Shylock

This kindness \(^{68}\) will I show:

Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Your guarantee,\(^{69}\) and, in a merry sport,\(^{70}\) / jest / game

If you repay me not on such a day,

In such a place, such sum or sums as are

Expressed\(^{6}\) in the condition, let the forfeit

Be designated as an equal pound\(^{71}\)

Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

From\(^{6}\) what part of your body pleaseth me.\(^{5}\)\(^{72}\)\(^{73}\)

\(<—\text{—Bassanio}^{74}\>

This is more beastly than bizarre. Ne’er have

I heard of terms so strange and ill-conceived.\(^{75}\)

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66. \{This is kind I offer\}:

kind: a) kindness, benevolence, b) kinship, friendship, c) something natural (as opposed to something ‘unnatural’—which is Antonio’s objection to charging interest on a loan, which allows barren metal to produce ‘offspring’ of metal. What is Shylock offering? “This is kind I offer—I am offering to loan you the money on your terms, in kind (likeness) with your sentiments, and to loan you money (as would a friend) without charging interest. I am going to offer you that but you storm and interrupt me and do not even allow me to make such an offer.” [See Additional Notes, 1.3.138]

67. / This is kindness!

Here Bassanio is confirming that such an offer (as this point—without having yet heard the grotesque terms of the bond) is kind. Bassanio, somewhat hapless, is not aware of the tricks and subterfuge that usurers use to deceive and entrap their victims. Some productions present the care-free Bassanio as a skeptical and have him pose the line as a cynical question or remark.

68. \{seal me there | Your single bond} / Your fullest guarantee

single bond: implies a bond that Antonio would singularly guarantee; an unconditional bond.

69. \{seal me there | Your single bond} / Your fullest guarantee

70. in a merry sport: / in light-hearted fun

Shylock presents the terms of the bond as a merry sport, a fun game, as something that should not be taken seriously—even suggesting that a pound of flesh is useless and that he would not take it even if the bond were forfeited. This, again, can be seen as the deception that usurers use to entrap their victims. This is not a game; this is deadly serious.

71. / Be such that I may have an equal pound

72. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.148a]

73. This grotesque term closely follows that found in Il Perecone: una libra di carne d’addosso di qualunque luogo e’ volese (a pound of flesh from whatever place you wish).

How does Shylock (or the Jew in Il Perecone, or in The Ballad of Gernutus) come to nominate this term of a pound of flesh?—’to be cut off and taken from what part of your body pleaseth me’? And how/why does the condition come to change, and come to read, ‘nearest his heart’?  {Ay, his breast, | So says the bond, doth it not noble judge? | ‘Nearest his heart,’ those are the very words. [4.1.249-251]} [See Additional Notes, 1.3.148b]

74. There is likely to be some emotional reaction (by Bassanio) to such a grotesque, alien, and bizarre condition—especially one that puts Antonio’s life in danger. Hence, to make known this sentiment, two lines have been added.

75. / These terms are beastly and bizarre. What dwells | In a man’s heart to contrive\(^{6}\) such a thing?

These terms are bizarre and ludicrous. | Ne’er have I heard a thing so ill-conceived.
Antonio
I have no doubts; I’ll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio
You shall not seal to such a bond for me;
I’d rather dwell within my present needs.

Antonio
Why, fear not, man, I will not forfeit it.
Within these two months—that’s a month before
This bond expires—I do expect return of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shylock
O father Abram, how these Christians are:
Their own hard dealings teach them to suspect their thoughts of others!
If he should break his day what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man’s flesh, taken from a man,
Has neither worth nor can afford a profit.
As flesh of mutton, cow, or goat. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu.
And for this gesture, for this act of kindness,
I pray you, wrong me not with evil motives.

76. {I’ll rather dwell in my necessity} / I’d rather suffer in my present needs
77. {break his day}: miss his payment when it is due (on such and such a day)
78. {Is not so estimable, profitable neither}: Has neither worth nor can afford a profit
79. This argument is, of course, specious. Shylock argues that the pound of flesh has no value—so why would he take it? Yet, the value gained by taking a pound of Antonio’s flesh is in killing Antonio. So, Shylock should have rightfully said, ‘What would I gain from taking the pound of flesh and killing Antonio?’
80. In all this talk we sense Shylock’s deceitfulness and see him using the ploy of a usurer to entrap Antonio; Shylock revealed this intention when he expressed a deep desire to ‘catch Antonio upon the hip,’ i.e., gain an advantage over him. Hence, we know that Shylock has a hidden agenda—to put Antonio at a disadvantage. So, what is Shylock trying to accomplish by having Antonio sign this bond? There are two possibilities: a) the remote possibility that Antonio would default on the bond and Shylock could exact his forfeiture, i.e., kill Antonio, or b) Shylock had Antonio sign such a bond—with such grotesque and unflattering terms—to debase Antonio and to somehow put Shylock on equal status with Antonio, at least in Shylock’s own mind. See Added Scene 2.1a for Shylock’s explanation as to why he nominated these terms for his bond. [See footnote for 1.3.148]
81. {And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not} / I pray, don’t assign to me an evil motive
   for my love: for this act of kindness
   wrong me not: / blame me not / don’t blame me / > don’t attribute or assign to me some wrong
This last part of Shylock’s speech (or argument) is one more example of the ‘deceptive art’ employed by usurers: first he says that a pound of human flesh is worthless, and so he would have no reason to take it; then he contends that he is acting out of love and kindness—and so much so that he does not want his actions to be misinterpreted as harmful—yet the exact opposite is true: the bond of a pound of flesh (which is humiliating) is worth a lot to Shylock, and his real intention is not motivated by love (as contended) but by hatred (as clearly revealed by Shylock earlier in the scene.) [38-49].
—Antonio
Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

—Shylock
Then meet me forthwith at the notary’s, / right away
Give him direction for this merry bond; / instructions // playful
And straightaway I’ll go to purse the ducats, / go collect
See to my house—left in the bumbling care / Check on {fearful guard}
Of an unthrifty knave—and soon thereafter, / and presently / and right away
I’ll be with you.

Exit Shylock

—Antonio Hurry thee, gentle Jew. {Hie thee} / Go with speed
The Hebrew will turn Christian—he grows kind.

—Bassanio
I like not fair terms from a villain’s mind. / and} / in

—Antonio
Come on, in this there can be no dismay,
My ships come home a month before the day. 89

Exeunt

83. {And I will go and purse the ducats straight} / And I’ll go straightaway to purse the ducats,
Previously Shylock stated that he would have to get the ducats from Tubal [55]; here he says that he has the ducats and will get them straightaway. Obviously his previous mention of needing to get the ducats from Tubal was untrue.
84. fearful guard: / terribly poor guard / inept hands
   The implication here is that Shylock’s inept servant (Launcelot) is not guarding the house, that he is asleep on the job; but more so Shylock is going to check on the ‘unthrifty knave’ to make sure he is not wasting things or eating too much.
85. {Of an unthrifty knave} / Of a do-nothing knave
   unthrifty: wasteful, unproductive, unprofitable, good for nothing; lazy
   The term thrift, as it is most often used, refers to success and profit. To a lesser degree it means, as it does today, one who is frugal and careful about his spending. Thus, an unthrifty knave would refer to someone who is unprofitable, someone who wastes one’s profit.
   Shy: ‘On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift’ [1.3.47]; Shy: And thrift is blessing if men steal it not’ [1.3.87].
   Shy: ‘Fast bind, fast find— | A proverb never stale in a thrifty mind.’ [2.5.53-54]
   knave: fool, imbecile
   It is doubtful that Shylock would be commenting to Antonio and Bassanio about his ‘unthrifty knave’ (Launcelot) nor would Shylock have any real reason to check on his house (left in ‘fearful guard.’) This line comes, however, as an unflattering introduction to Shylock’s foolish servant, Launcelot, so that when the knave first appears in 2.2 the audience will have some sense of who he is.
87. {I like not fair terms and a villain’s mind} 88 fair . . . villain: these terms are contrasted, with fair referring to the fairness of Christian values and villain referring to a Jew. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.176]
88. Possible addition of one line: {Nor am I comfort’d in the terms we find.} / Nor do I find comfort in terms we find
The virtue of this added line (though it weakens the two-line rhyme scheme) would be to further express Bassanio’s uneasiness.
89. / Come now, in this there can be no concern, | A month before the day my ships return.
ACT TWO - Scene One  

Portia’s house in Belmont.

A flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince from Morocco (a dark-skinned Moor dressed in white), with three or four followers (of similar complexion) along with Portia, Nerissa, and attendants

—Morocco

Mislike my complexion; / Dislike
This darkened raiment of the burnished sun / shadowed livery // bestowed by the sun
Is worn by all who breed so near its fire. / who live // beneath
Bring me a man whose skin is light and fair,
Born from the coldest regions of the north,
Where the sun’s heat can scarce thaw an icicle. / rays / fire // scarcely thaw the ice
And let us make a cut at love’s behest, / cut our skin // request
To prove whose blood is reddest—his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine / I say, dear lady // feature
Has brought much fear to brave and valiant men. / And by my love, I swear, it too was loved
By the most-honored virgins of our clime. / best-regarded // region
I would not change this dark and noble hue
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen. 12 13 / know 14

1. This short, filler scene helps alternate the action between Venice and Belmont. In the interest of brevity many productions merge elements of this scene with Morocco’s next appearance in 2.7.
2. / Do not disfavor me for my complexion
   my complexion: Morocco is referring to his dark complexion. A light complexion was held (be Europeans) to be fair (beautiful) whereas a dark complexion was considered unattractive (it being the color of the devil). To fit the meter, complexion is pronounced with four syllables: comPLEXeeON
4. (To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.) / Which all my kin bred ‘neath its rays do wear.
5. (Bring me a fair creature born in the north / Bring me a man with light and frosty skin,
7. (Where Phoebus’s fire scarce thaws the icicles)

   Phoebus’s fire: the sun’s heat. Phoebus was god of the sun.
8. (And let us make incision for your love)
12. The whole of Morocco’s plea, up to this point, is based on his physical appearance; he hopes to persuade Portia to overcome the prejudice and dislike she has of those with a dark complexion.
13. In the next part of this scene Morocco expounds on the virtue of his strength and physical attributes; swearing upon his sword, he tells how he would outstare and outbrave the most daring men, and defy bears and lions. After that he likens himself to Hercules, the strongest man on earth.

   In terms of the three suitors, Morocco represents the physical dimension and its superior position (in terms of strength over others). This can be seen as the exterior or outermost attribute of a person; thus, according to his own “outer” disposition, Morocco chooses the gold chest. Arragon represents the mind and its superior position when compared to the physical body. This is still exterior to the true essence or the heart of a man. Accordingly, Arragon chooses the silver casket, which represents the quality of the mind. Bassanio, in this particular scene, represents the heart, the innermost being of a man—which is not swayed by outer show—and, accordingly, he chooses the lead. Bassanio’s speech in front of the caskets, however, belies the true sentiment of the heart; his speech is critical, riddled with discordant images, and it makes not one reference to Portia (or her attributes). Morocco is true to himself, and speaks and chooses accordingly; Aragon is true to himself, and speaks and chooses accordingly. With Bassanio, however, there is a mismatch; his speech before the caskets does not match his choice. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.73]
14. to steal your thoughts: to gain access to, or win, your thoughts; to ‘win your affection.’ In other words, Morocco would give up his dark appearance, which is his dearest possession, to win Portia’s affection.
In terms of choice, Portia has no choice in the matter. So all of Morocco’s pleas to Portia to ‘mislike him not’ for his dark complexion are irrelevant. Morocco, however, being a man of honor, would find no gratification in winning Portia if she despised the way he looked.

nice direction: attraction toward what is pleasing.

besides, the lott’ry of my destiny: / of my father’s will / deems my fate

Prevents me from effecting mine own choice / Prevents me from a voluntary choosing / Denies me from the right of mine own choice.

hedged: hedged me in, restricted me, bound me (by oath)

his wit: his wisdom, his ingenuity (by which this lottery was devised)

to yield myself: to give myself as wife (in way of marriage)

Yourself, renowné prince, would stand as fair

then stood as fair: a) stand as favored, worthy, b) were as appealing, attractive, c) stood as fair a chance

Portia tells Morocco that he stands as fair (a chance) as any suitor she has looked upon (for her affection) so far. Morocco takes this as a complement. What Portia does not tell Morocco is that she has found all the previous suitors to be deplorable—Morocco, looking like a devil to her, stands equal to the German ‘sponge,’ the French ‘no man,’ the dreadfully sad Count, the self-promoting Neopolitan, and the ill-suited Englishman. In the instance where fair refers to Morocco’s equal chances of winning her, she is not saying anything either: she is saying that Morocco has as fair (equal) a chance of winning her (and her affection) as any suitor she has thus far looked upon.
As any comer I have looked on yet // I’ve yet looked upon
For my affection. // To win my favor

—Morocco Even for that I thank you.
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar // Arab(ian) sword / faithful sword
That slew a Sultan and a Persian Prince, {Sophy} / Emp’ror / great Shah
That thrice defeated the great Suleiman, // the Sultan of Turkey
I would o’er stare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the boldest heart that e’er did beat; // harshest
Pluck the young suckling cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when it roars for prey, // Snatch / grab
To win thee, lady. But alas the while,
If Hercules and his servant play dice, // Defy {he}
The hand of chance decides the better man // determines the victor / winner
Which may grant victory to the weaker hand: // fortune / triumph
So is the hero beaten by his page. // bested
And so may I, blind fortune leading me, // with mere chance // led forth by blinded luck
Miss that which one of lesser worth attains— // one unworthier may
And die with grieving.

—Portia You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to chose at all // vacate all your rights to choose
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong, // beforehand, that

22. scimitar: a curved, single-edged sword. In a possible staging, Morocco could draw and flourish his scimitar (much to the surprise of Portia’s attendants). This would make clear the reference his sword (for those who are not familiar with the term scimitar).
23. {That won three fields of Sultan Suleiman} / That won three battles against Suleiman.
24. {Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth}
25. / And grab the prey from a hungry lion
26. {If Hercules and Lichas play at dice}
   Lichas: Hercules’s somewhat low-minded servant. Lichas was thrown into the sea by Hercules after he (Lichas) unwittingly brought Hercules a poisoned shirt which killed him (Hercules).
27. / A throw by chance / A random throw / A chancéd toss
28. {So is Alicides beaten by his rage}
   Alicides: Hercules
   rage: wanton behavior, wild folly, anger. Although Hercules was known to display rage, the notion of him being defeated by his rage—with respect to the chance drawing of the lottery—does not really fit. Pope emends rage with page, which is similar to the emendation of rogue (derived from roge.) Both terms apply to a servant of Hercules. Hence, the intended meaning would be that Hercules is beaten by his page or his rogue—by a far lesser man, both in terms of strength and character—which is possible when the competition is based solely upon a pure chance throw of the dice, rather than skill.
29. Morocco is complaining that the lottery is comparable to a mere chance throwing of the dice and, as such, may go to a lesser man than himself. Morocco is used to proving his worth and power through physical means; this means of winning Portia through the solving of a riddle is alien to outward, physically-oriented Morocco.
30. Possibility to add a clarifying line here: {And not the prowess held by mine own hand}
   {And not the skillful means of mine own hand} / endeavors / own effort
31. / And I, now being led by blind fortune, / May miss the prize a lesser man might win.
To ne’er thereafter take a lady’s hand. ³³
By way of marriage. Therefore, be advised.³

—Morocco
I need not.³ Come, bring me unto my chance.³⁴

—Portia
First forward to the altar, (there to take
The solemn oath required.) After dinner ³⁵
Your hazard shall be made.

—Morocco
Good fortune then,
To make me blest or curséd’st among men.

Flourish of cornets. Exeunt

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³³. {Never to speak to lady afterward)
³⁴. / I do accept—now bring me to the caskets / I will accept—bring me unto the caskets
³⁵. / First, make your oath at the chapel. This evening / Make first your solemn vow. Then, after dinner,
ACT Two, Scene One, A 2.1A

Venice. Enter Shylock and Tubal

—Tubal
Three thousand ducats to Antonio?

—Shylock
He loathes me, my means, my profits. He spits on my face and calls me a cut-throat, a dog. And why?—because I loan money to those who are in need. Well, now Antonio is the one in need. Let him revile me at the mart. Let him peddle his Christian virtue. How then will I respond? I will say: ‘Antonio, did you not once borrow money from me? Did I not loan you money, gratis, out of friendship?’ What would he say to that? Would he be smug and indignant? Would he spit on my face? Nay, the moment Antonio seals this bond he will have nothing over me.

—Tubal 1
And if he forfeits, what then?

—Shylock
Nay, nay, Antonio will not forfeit. There is little chance that Antonio will forfeit. The only thing he will forfeit is his Christian righteousness.

—Tubal
But a pound of flesh? Such a bond is strange and unseemly?

—Shylock 2 So you ask, ‘why a pound of flesh?’ I say, if nothing more than to humiliate him, to debase him as he has debased me. Let him call me usurer; I will call him harlot. He has put up his body for money, my money. Now tell me, what could the good Christian say to that?

Exeunt
ACT TWO - Scene Two  2.2.0

_Venice._ Enter Launcelet Gobbo, the clown, alone._

—Launcelet

Certainly my conscience will not permit me to run from this Jew, my master. The fiend at mine elbow tempts me, saying, ‘Gobbo, Launcelet Gobbo, good Launcelet,’ or ‘good Gobbo,’ or ‘good Launcelet Gobbo’—‘use your legs, take the start, run away.’ My conscience says, ‘No, take heed, honorable Launcelet; take heed honest Gobbo,’—or as aforesaid, ‘honorable Launcelet Gobbo’—‘do not run; scorn running’ with thy heels.’ Well the most courageous fiend bids me pack my things. ‘Get going!’ says the fiend. ‘Away!’ says the fiend. ‘For the sake of heaven,’ says the fiend, ‘rouse up a brave mind—and run.’ Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, ‘My honest friend Launcelet’—being an honest man’s son, or rather, an honest woman’s son—for indeed my father did something lewd, something sticky, he had a kind of taste (for women who would . . . )—well, my conscience says, ‘Launcelet, budge not.’ ‘Budge,’ says the fiend. ‘Budge

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1. Launcelet’s soliloquy, which provides some comic relief, may have more significance than immediately realized. This is the only time a character appears alone on stage (apart from the two exiting lines delivered by Jessica in 2.6.55-6). This is not significant in itself but may echo the larger issue of Shylock’s internal battle with his own conscience (and his own fiend) with respect to his actions against Antonio. Shylock, tries to resolve his inner turmoil by making an oath to God that he will have his bond even though his conscience and Jewish sense of rightousness bids him to do otherwise. Ironically, Shylock makes his oath to God so that he may have the resolve to support the fiend and go against his conscience. Thus, in the end, both Shylock and Launcelet give into their fiendish side.

The moment Launcelet decides to run (and give into the fiend) he collides with his father, which can be seen as his higher sense of conscience. Later in the play Shylock, trying to give into his fiend, collides with Portia’s superior position and is stopped before he can commit his sinful action.  [See Additional Notes: 2.2.1]

2. (Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master)
   / will not allow me to run / will serve me / if it allows me / to run / will try an prevent my running
   certainly: Launcelet opens the scene with the word, certainly, which tells us that he is certain about his own uncertainty. Such an ironic certainty is also had by Shylock.
   serve: a) permit, allow, b) prevent, not permit, not allow, ‘say nothing against’ In the context of the following monologue—where Launcelet’s conscience is bidding him to stay while the fiend at his elbow is telling him to go—the term serve would more likely mean prevent than serve (or allow). (It could also be a error for sever—an odd form meaning prevent or keep me from—but this is unlikely). Various explanations have been offered as to what this line might mean, such as: ‘I’m sure I’ll feel guilty if I run from this Jew,’ (Crowther); ‘I can run away from my master the Jew with a clear conscience,’ (Durband); ‘although conscience speaks against it, he will show good reason why he should go,’ (Brown).

3. / by my good side
4. / get them going
5. / (Via!) / Get ye gone! / Away! via: Italian for ‘away’
6. / let bravery enter your mind
7. my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart: an anatomical mix-up, signifying timidity, ‘a clinging, affectionate attitude,’ or perhaps a reference to ‘being all choked up.’
8. honest: in the sense of one who is faithful, one who keeps his marriage vows or fidelity.
9. / / did something which smacked, something grow to, he had a kind of taste—well . . .
   / / did something which smacked of the lewd, something gross / did something smacked, something gross, it left a bad taste in the mouth—well . . .
   smack: pertaining to vice, lecherous, lewd. It also means a) to kiss noisily; b) a flavor or trait
   grow to: an expression that generally referred to burnt milk which gets stuck to the bottom of a pan or to that which has the taste of burnt milk—and by extension it could mean something that has been ruined and/or which has a bad taste; also something sticky (like milk sticking to the bottom of a pot)—which might carry a lewd reference to semen. The term could be rendered as: something sticky; something gross (which sounds like grow to); something that leaves a bad taste; unsavory; ruined (as in a dish ruined by burning), etc. Some commentators hold the term to mean, ‘to grow or get larger,’ implicating a male erection but such an interpretation is a bit of a stretch and does not fit in with the rest of the content.
   taste: a) inclination toward; b) enjoyment, relish in; c) funny smell about him; d) taste for woman
The three references in this line (smack, grow to, and taste) all suggest some kind of lechery and untoward sexual conduct—all of which makes Launcelet the son of a not-quite honest man.
not,’ says my conscience. ‘Conscience,’ I say, ‘you counsel well.’ ‘Fiend,’ I say, ‘you counsel well.’ If I were ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew, my master, who—God forgive me for saying— is a kind of devil. And, if I were to I run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who, with all due respect, is the devil himself. My conscience is but a kind of hard conscience that offers to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. O fiend, I will run. My heels are at your commandment—I will run.

Enter Old Gobbo, gravel-blind, with a basket

—Old Gobbo
Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew’s?

—Launcelot [aside]
O heavens, this is my true-begotten father who, being more than sand-blind—high-gravel-blind—knows me not. I will try confusing him.

—Old Gobbo
Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew’s?

—Launcelot
Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning after that, turn left. Then!—(pay careful attention)—at the very next turning, don’t turn at all but veer off indirectly to the Jew’s house.

10. {God bless the mark}
11. {saving your reverence} / pardon me for saying
12. The line found in the original {Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and in my conscience—‘‘} is uncertain and was likely inserted into the text as an afterthought (by someone other than the Author). This unlikely addition also weakens (and contradicts) the word play found in the previous line—which states that the Jew is a kind of devil and the fiend is the devil himself. The repetition of the word ‘certainly’ which begins the soliloquy is also suspect. The term, incarnation, is a poor pun for incarnate. All said, the line is weak and suspect and therefore it has been deleted.
13. will not permit: [will serve] / will not allow honorable: [honest] scorn running: scorn such running bids me pack: urges me to pack for the sake of heavens: [for the heavens] / for heaven’s sake
14. Launcelot’s exit could be staged by his running into his gravel-blind father, who is just entering. His being stopped by his father could be seen as a symbolic representation of his conscience (superego) which stops him, despite his ‘final’ decision to follow the fiend’s counsel and run away.

The scene between Launcelot and his father takes up over 75 lines and then involves Bassanio for another 50 lines, for a total of 125 lines [30-161] yet none of this moves the story. Thus, most productions edit down or delete this portion of the scene. For instance, the entire interaction between Launcelot and his father (as well as between Launcelot, his father, and Bassanio) could be cut [30-161] with the scene continuing at line 162, with Bassanio instructing Lorenzo {I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this}. Another way to edit the scene would be to remove Old Gobbo altogether: the scene would include Launcelot’s opening monologue [1-30], then have Launcelot exit the stage, running into Bassanio or one of his men (instead of Old Gobbo). With no actual father present, Launcelot (unable to muster his own courage to speak directly to Bassanio) could invoke (and play the part of) an imaginary father to help him; as such, we would see the same kind of split-personality he displayed in the opening of the scene. {For a line by line editing of how such a scene would play out, see Additional Notes 2.2.29}

15. my true begotten father: a mix-up for, ‘my true begotten son.’ Launcelot was begotten by Old Gobbo not the other way around. The phrase is backwards, yet we clearly understand this to mean that Old Gobbo is Launcelot’s true father.
16. sand-blind, high-gravel-blind: blindness comes in gradations and Launcelot makes up a some new terms: sand blind is someone partially blind; gravel-blind is someone midway between sand-blind and stone-blind (total blindness), high-gravel blind is somewhere between gravel-blind and stone-blind, which means he can barely see at all.
17. {I will try confusions with him.}

18. confusions: Q2 renders this as conclusions which means ‘experiments’—‘I will try experimenting with him (to see how he reacts.)’ Launcelot, however, seems more intent on playfully confusing his father.
19. Then!: {marry}: The term marry has the force of “verily,” “indeed” and by extension, ‘now listen carefully’ or ‘pay attention,’ etc.
—Old Gobbo

By the saints of God\textsuperscript{20} ‘twill be a hard place\textsuperscript{o} to hit.\textsuperscript{o} Can you tell me whether one Launcelet, who is supposed to live with him, still lives with him or no? \textsuperscript{21}

—Launcelet

Talk you of young Master Launcelet? \textsuperscript{aside} Watch me now—I will raise a few tears!\textsuperscript{o} Talk you of young Master Launcelet?

—Old Gobbo

No ‘master,’ sir, but a poor man’s son. His father, though I say it, is an honest, exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, in good health.\textsuperscript{o}

—Launcelet

Well, let his father be what he will, we talk of young Master Launcelet.

—Old Gobbo

Is he your worship’s friend, my Launcelet, sir? \textsuperscript{22}

—Launcelet

But I pray you, \textit{ergo},\textsuperscript{23} old man, \textit{ergo} I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelet?

—Old Gobbo

Of Launcelet, if it\textsuperscript{o} please your mastership. \textsuperscript{ant} / should it

—Launcelet

\textit{Ergo} Master Launcelet. Talk not of Master Launcelet, old man,\textsuperscript{9} for the young gentleman—according to his fate and destiny, and various legends that include the three sisters\textsuperscript{25}—(who measure out and cut the thread of one’s life)\textsuperscript{26}—and such branches of learning—is, indeed deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven. \textsuperscript{father}

—Old Gobbo

Mother of God—forbid! The boy was (to be) the staff of my older years, my very prop.

—Launcelet

\textsuperscript{20} {By God’s sonties} / By God’s little saints / Even with God’s favor / Even with God’s help / Even with the blessings of God

\textit{sonties:} a) little saints, b) sanctity, blessedness.

\textsuperscript{21} {Can you tell me whether one Launcelet that dwells with him dwells with him or not?} / Can you tell me whether one Launcelet, who is supposed to live with him, lives with him or not?

\textit{place:} {way} \textit{hit:} / find

\textsuperscript{22} {Your worship’s friend and Launcelet, sir.} / My worship, do you know my boy Launcelet, sir?

\textit{your worship:} honorific title for someone of high standing

\textit{your worship’s friend:} this could be interpreted as a polite rejection of the title of ‘master’ (when applied to Launcelet), who is not a master. This resembles the previous line, where Old Gobbo rejects the term ‘master’ when applied to Launcelet (‘No ‘master,’ sir, but a poor man’s son.’ [47].) Here, again, he makes the same correction so that there is no confusion and to insure that the two parties are referring to the same Launcelet—who is not a master.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{ergo}: Latin term which means, ‘therefore,’ herein used by Launcelet to impress his father with his knowledge Latin, and also to mock scholars who were wont to overuse the term.

\textsuperscript{25} {Sisters Three} The three old women of classical mythology who spin, measure, and cut the thread of a person’s life, thus determining the length of one’s life span.

\textsuperscript{26} / who measure the length of a man’s life / who determine the length of one’s life
Do I look like a short stick or a post to hold up a sagging hovel? Am I but a staff or a prop?—Do you not know me, father?

—Old Gobbo
Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman. But I pray you, tell me, is my boy—God rest his soul—alive or dead?

—Launcele
Do you not know me father?

—Old Gobbo
Alack sir, I am all but blind. I know you not. [I am sand-blind]

—Launcele
Nay, indeed, even if you had your eyes, you might still fail in knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. [he kneels] Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light, just as a crime cannot be hidden for long. A man’s son may (also hide) but in the end the truth will come out. / be known

—Old Gobbo
Pray you, sir, stand up. I am sure you are not Launcele, my boy.

—Launcele
Pray you, let’s have no more fooling about it but give me your blessing: I am Launcele, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

—Old Gobbo
I cannot think you are my son.

—Launcele
I know not what I shall think of that. But I am Launcele, the Jew’s man, and I am sure Margery, your wife, is my mother.

—Old Gobbo
Her name is Margery, indeed. I’ll be sworn, if thou be Launcele, thou are mine own flesh and blood.

Old Gobbo reaches out to feel Launcele’s face
Launcele offers the back of his head

27. {Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop?}
cudgel: short branch, club
28. {Do you know me, father?}
29. Inversion of the proverb: ‘It’s a wise child who knows his own father.’
30. / stop all the pretending
31. The action parallels of the same trick played on Isaac by Jacob and his mother (a story referenced by Shylock in his first meeting with Antonio). In this story, Jacob substituted himself for Esau (Jacob’s older brother) in order to receive his father’s blessings. Jacob, who was smooth-skinned, placed lamb wool over his face and hands—to ‘feel’ hairy like his brother. When his blind father touched his face, he believed that he was touching Esau (not Jacob) and thereupon blessed Jacob and bequeathed to him all his land and possessions.
All praise the Lord, what a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin, my cart-horse, has on his tail.

—Launcelet
It should seem, then, that Dobbin’s tail grows from long to short: I am sure he had more hair on his tail than I have on my face, when I last saw him. [backwards]

—Old Gobbo
Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master get along? I have brought him a present. How ‘gree you now? [agree]

—Launcelet
Well, well, but for mine own part, I have decided to risk it all and run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master’s a very Jew. Give him a present?—rather give him a noose! I am famished in his service; you may count every rib I have with your fingers.

(Launcelet guides Old Gobbo’s fingers to the side of his chest. Old Gobbo’s fingers fall down to Launcelet’s pot belly; Launcelet again guides Old Gobbo’s fingers to his ribs, and they again fall to his belly. Launcelet retreats.)

Father, I am glad you are come. Give your present, for me, to one Master Bassanio, who indeed fashions his servants with fine new uniforms. If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has made ground.
Enter Bassanio, with Leonardo and other followers

O rare fortune! 43 Here comes the man—to him, father, (give him your gift.) 44

—Bassanio [to one of his men]
You may do so, but let it be done quickly that supper be ready at the latest by 5 five o’clock. See these letters delivered, put the new uniforms to making, and direct 45 Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

Exit Servant

—Launcelet [pushing his father]
To him, father.

—Old Gobbo [bowing]
God bless your worship.

—Bassanio
Many thanks.47 Would’st thou want o with me?

—Old Gobbo
Here’s my son, sir, a poor boy—

—Launcelet [steps forward]
Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew’s man that would, sir, as my father shall specify—

[pulls his father in front]

—Old Gobbo
He hath a great infection, o sir, as one would say, to serve— > affection / desire

—Launcelet [pulls his father away]
Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have the desire, as my father shall specify—

[pulls his father in front]

43. / What a stroke of luck!
44. In Q1, the line reads: {To him father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.}

for I am a Jew: for I am a villain
This appears as another ex post facto line added to the text—which is also evidenced in 24-25 and 160. As expected, most of these corrupted (and Jew-disparaging) lines, are added toward the end of a passage, where they can most easily be ‘slipped into’ the text (without much disruption). However, in virtually all cases, these ‘corrupted emendations’ appear misplaced, gratuitous, and orphaned from the rest of the passage—both in terms of style and content.
45. Bassanio is busy preparing for his departure to Belmont, which is to take place later that night.
put the new uniforms to making: {put the liveries to making} refers to the uniforms (not yet made) which are needed for the servants who will be attending Bassanio on his trip to Belmont.
and direct Gratiano: this also refers to Bassanio’s trip—Bassanio seeks to take Gratiano with him to Belmont, even before Gratiano makes his request to go [2.2.170]  [See Additional Notes, 2.2.113]
46. done quickly: [so hasted]  at the lasted by: [at the farthest by] no later than  direct: {desire} / please have
47. {Gramercy}: lit.: ‘grant mercy’; [God] grant [you] mercy
—Old Gobbo
His master and he—saving your worship’s reverence—are scarce on good terms.

—Launcelot
To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father—being, I hope, a respected man—shall frutify unto you.

—Old Gobbo
I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

—Launcelot
In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and though I say it, it is though this old man, this poor man, my father—

—Bassanio
Let one but speak for both. What do you seek?

—Launcelot
To serve you, sir.

—Old Gobbo
That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

—Bassanio
I know thee well. Thou hast obtained thy suit. I shall grant thy request.

Shylock, thy master, spoke with me this day
And recommended thee. But why prefer To leave a rich Jew’s service to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman?

48. {are scarce cater-cousins}  
**scarce:** (a) scarcely, hardly  
**cater-cousins:** close friends, those who give (or cater) to each other like cousins

49. Error for fructify or certify.

50. Error for pertinent. Impertinent seems to be a blend between important and pertinent

51. {though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father} / it is though said by this old man

52. / What would you want of me?

53. Mistake for effect, purpose, or purport

54. Bassanio is referring to a conversation had between himself and Shylock. This tells us, moreover, that Shylock and Bassanio are on speaking, and somewhat friendly, terms. We do not know what Shylock could have said about Launcelet to prompt Bassanio to so readily accept him—unless it was that Shylock, wanting to get rid of gormandizing Launcelet, highly recommended his wasteful servant to Bassanio.

55. This one line could be replaced with three lines—lines that express Shylock wanting so much to get rid of Launcelet that we would be willing to pay Bassanio to take the fool.
   And recommended you (and was so kind  
   To offer me some gold if I would take you.)  
   Tell me, is this a change that you prefer
Launcelet
As the old proverb says, ‘The grace of God provides enough.’
This very well divides my master Shylock from you, sir: you have the ‘grace of God,’ sir, and he hath ‘enough.’

Bassanio
Thou speakest it well—[to Old Gobbo] Go, father, with thy son.
[to Launcelet] Take leave of thy old master; then make way
Unto my house. [To one of his men] Give him a uniform\(^\circ\) {livery}
More fancy\(^\circ\) than his fellows.\(^\circ\) See it done.\(^9\) / braided / trimmed // the others

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57. The old proverb is: ‘The grace of God is gear enough,’ which comes from the biblical passage: ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ [2 Cor. 12:9]

58. {The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.}

59. {Give him a livery | More guarded than his fellows.}

\textbf{guarded:} ornamented with braid or trim; fancy, trimmed, ornamental. Why Launcelet gets a uniform ‘more guarded than his fellows’ is not clear. Launcelet’s fancy uniform finds likeness to the gold casket which is the most ornamental in show yet which contains the least inside. The ornamental garment also brings to mind the image of a ‘yellow-guarded coat’ which might be worn by a fool or a jester. We must, however, assume Bassanio’s motives are generous, and welcoming, and have nothing to do with accentuating Lancelet’s fool-heartedness.
Launcelet

Father, let’s go. I cannot get a service job (on my own)?—I have ne’er a tongue in my head! [Looking at his palm] Well, if any man in Italy has a fairer palm, which he may offer to swear upon the Book, I shall have good fortune. [Looking more closely at the lines] What—here’s a simple line of life and it tells of a small trifle of wives, alas, fifteen in the least; A dozen widows and nine maids is a simple income—or coming-in—for one man. And here it says I will ‘scape from drowning thrice and elude the peril of a sword—belonging to a man who catches me on the edge of a featherbed with his wife. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she’s a good wench for this task. Father, come, I’ll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.  

Exeunt Launcelet and Old Gobbo

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60. / I cannot speak for myself?

This line is delivered with sarcasm. Launcelet is realizing (in a moment of clarity) that he is a fool and cannot even get a service job for himself (without the help of his father). This is soon remedied when Launcelet takes to reading his own palm and ‘discovers’ that rather than having a simple life (as expected) he is going to be a grand personage, with 15 wives!

61. {Go to}: a) a slight expression of disbelief and surprise: come on, what’s this (unexpected thing I see); b) a slight curse, such as: damn, to hell, go to hell. Launcelet, looking at his palm, could a) be pleasantly surprised about his good fortune and all the wives and adventure he is going to have, or b) be taken aback and cursing his discovery of a simple lifeline—which he then refutes. [See Additional Notes, 2.2.153]

Shylock uses the same phrase, in 1.3.112 [Well, now it appears you need my help— | Go to, then].

62. / And in regards to that small matter of wives, [looking down again]— alas, here it says fifteen wives in the very least.

63. {a leven}: The two-word term suggests the analogy of ‘a dozen’ (or ‘an even dozen’) though most editions supplant the term with ‘eleven.’ Some editions retain the spelling ‘aleven’ which seems to imply ‘eleven.’

64. {is a simple coming-in}: implies income, perhaps from dowries, but also has the sexual innuendo of entering into (coming-in) a woman.

65. {and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed— here are simple scapes}

the edge of a feather-bed: this implies that he is coming out of a soft-bed with another man’s wife (which puts his life in peril). This is humorous mix-up of the phrase, ‘the edge of a sword’ becomes ‘edge of a feather-bed.”

66. {I’ll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.}

in the twinkling: immediately, without delay, in the blink of an eye, in ‘the twinkling of an eye.’ This line, along with a few others in the scene [including 24-5, and 108] are “off” in terms of content and tonality. This line could be left as is (in its incomplete form), emended (‘in the twinkling of an eye’), or rectified—preserving the intent of the line, which is that Launcelet intends to take leave of the Jew without delay. A comical emendation would be to use the term tinkle in place of twinkle. [I’ll take my leave of the Jew before I tinkle.] This absurd image would be used to mock the hero’s cry, who, having an urgent task to perform, tells his lady that he will not sleep until the task is accomplished. This is the pledge Bassanio makes to Portia right before he takes his leave from Belmont [3.2.321-24]. Here Launcelet would make the heroic claim that he will not urinate until his task is accomplished. As part of a comic staging, Launcelet could look very restless, needing to go real bad, and hence be in a great hurry to take leave of the Jew and thus relieve himself.

67. let’s go: [in] he may: [doth] palm: [table] and it tells of: [here’s] in the least: [is nothing] task: [gear] / work / stuff / business / matter
—Bassanio [continuing his instructions]
I pray, Leonardo, attend thee to this:  

When everything is bought and stowed on board  

Return in haste, for I do feast tonight  

With all my dearest friends.  

— Leonardo
My best endeavors shall be done herein.  

Leonardo moves to exit. Enter Gratziano.

—Gratziano
Where’s your master?

—Leonardo  

Yonder, sir, he walks.

Exit Leonardo

—Gratziano
Signior Bassanio!

—Bassanio

Signior Gratziano!  

—Gratziano
I have a suit for you.  

—Bassanio
You have obtained it.  

—Gratziano
Very well: I must go with you to Belmont.

__

68. {I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this} / I pray thee Leonard, attend to this  

think on this: a) attend to these matters, b) think carefully about what I am saying  

69. Bassanio is preparing to leave for Belmont and is having his provisions stowed on board his ship.  

70. {for I do feast tonight}  

feast: a) entertain, throw a feast for (my best-esteemed acquaintance); b) eat, party, enjoy myself at a feast (with my best-esteemed acquaintance)  

71. {... for I do feast tonight | My best-esteemed acquaintance. Hie thee, go.}  

The reference here is singular; Bassanio refers to his best-esteemed acquaintance. This might be interpreted as a reference to Antonio yet Antonio is his dearest friend not his best-esteemed acquaintance. Odd as it may seem, this is most likely a reference to Shylock, who is an acquaintance (not a friend) and who is best-esteemed in that he loaned Bassanio the money that enabled him to make his journey. Thus, Shylock as the best-esteemed acquaintance will be the honored guest at Bassanio’s celebration. Obviously Shylock does not view Shylock and his usury with the same vitriol as does Antonio.  

72. Q1 has: ‘Gratiano.’ Signior has been added to complete the meter, and to echo Gratziano’s words.  

73. {You must not deny me. I must go with you to Belmont.}  

This line is likely corrupt for the following reasons: a) the iambics are misplaced (with no emphasis on the fourth syllable) and b) the line contains seven iambics (instead of five). In addition, Gratiano is amiss in making a demand [you must not deny me] after his request has already been granted. More likely, Gratiano would be confirming what Bassanio had just granted, with a line such as: ‘Very well then—I’ll go with you to Belmont.’ To bring this line into the regular iambic meter, some editions add ‘Nay,’ to the beginning: ‘Nay, you must not deny me. I must go | With you to Belmont.’ Another way to rectify the line (in terms of meter and content) would be to have Bassanio grant Gratiano’s request once,
Grat: I have a suit—and you must not say ‘no’—
 Signor, I must go with you to Belmont.
Bass: Why then you must. But hear thee Gratiano,

74. Bassanio may have known of Gratiano’s request before he even asked it—and that is why he granted Gratiano’s suit without even hearing it. This is in accord with the following suppositions: a) Before the action of the play begins, Nerissa may have had a chance meeting with Gratiano, where they took a liking to each other and where Nerissa heard about Bassanio, and where she recalled that Bassanio had already been to Belmont and caught Portia’s eye; b) Nerissa arranged to have a secret meeting with Bassanio (which Bassanio told Antonio about in opening act of the play), where Nerissa told him about the lottery devised by Portia’s father and gave him the assurance that if he could win Portia’s love then she (Nerissa) would give him a hint by which he could win the lottery, and c) as part of this plan—and likely for her own romantic interests—she asked that Bassanio bring Gratiano with him to Belmont. [See Additional Note, 2.2.171]
——Bassanio
Why then you must, but hear thee Gratziano:
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice——
Parts that become thee happily enough
And, to our eyes, do not appear as faults——
But where thou art not known these may appear
Something too overbearing. Thus, take pains
To allay with some drops of self-control
Thy bounding spirit lest through thy wild behavior
I be disfavored in the place I go
And lose my hopes (of success).

——Gratziano
Now hear me:
If I do not display a staid demeanor,
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Hold a prayer-book in my hand,
Nay, more, while saying grace, cover mine eyes
Thus, with my hat, and sigh, and say, ‘Amen,’
And follow every count of good behavior——
Like one well-studied in a sad expression
To please his grandma——never trust me more.

75. / Aspects that suit / fittingly
76. {And in such eyes as ours appear not faults} / And traits that we do not decry as faults
77. {But where thou art not known} / But where they know you not
78. {Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain} / somewhat too boisterous, ‘in-your-face,’ etc.
79. {To allay with some cold drops of modesty}
80. One could expand the previous two line into three lines:
   / To much allay thy exuberant spirit
   With a few drops of cooling modesty,
   Lest through your wild and raucous behavior

81. {I be misconstered} / I find disfavor
82. And lose my hopes: Perhaps Gratziano’s rude and boisterous behavior might cause Portia to look less favorable upon Bassanio. If Bassanio intended to win the lottery, and Portia, by his own wits then Gratziano’s actions would have no effect on the outcome of the lottery nor cause Bassanio to ‘lose his hopes.’ Thus it appears that Bassanio is pinning his hopes of success on something other than his ability to solve the riddle and chose the right casket. If, however, Bassanio was assured that he would get some help with the lottery (from Nerissa) if he is able to win Portia’s heart, then Gratziano’s rudeness might put off Portia and, thus, Bassanio would lose his hopes of Portia falling in love with him.

[See Additional Notes, 2.2.181]
83. {If I do not put on a sober habit} / I be misconstrued / I find disfavor
84. / Nay, more, while grace is being said, look down
85. / Wear prayer-books in my pocket
86. / Use all observance of civility / Observe all manner of good behavior / And use all manner of civility // And employ every manner of politeness
87. / So as to please his grandma—trust me never.
—Bassanio
Well, we shall see the way you hold yourself.

—Gratziano
Nay, but I drink tonight. You shall not judge me by what we do tonight.

—Bassanio
No, t’were a pity. I would entreat you rather to put on your boldest suit of mirth; for we have friends that want some merriment. But fare you well, I have some business.

—Gratziano
And I must meet Lorenzo and the rest. But we will visit you at suppertime.

Exeunt

88. but I bar tonight: I go to the bars tonight; I party tonight; I am exempt from any such restrictions tonight
89. [No, that were a pity]
   No, that would be a pity if you could not be your natural self, if you were barred from drinking and having fun tonight
90. {That purpose merriment. But fare you well} / Who're set on merriment
ACT TWO - Scene Three

Shylock’s house. Enter Jessica and Launcelet.

—Jessica
I’m sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell; and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well. There is a ducat for thee.
And Launcelet, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master’s guest.
Give him this letter; do it secretly.
And so farewell. I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

—Launcelet
Adieu. Tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew. If a Christian did not fool ’round with your mother and get thee I am much deceived. But adieu. These foolish drops do sometimes drown my manly spirit. Adieu.

Exit Launcelet

—Jessica
Farewell, good Launcelet.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,
To shun my father and betray his trust.
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners.
If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

Exit

---

1. Rowe did not divide 2.2 - 2.6 into separate scenes but played them all as one continuous action.
2. / When things got hellishly drab around here, | You, like a merry devil, came to rob | The taste of tediousness with your laughter.
3. Slip for inhibit, but this term might also apply in the sense that he is talking with his tears and that his tears are telling what his tongue is unable to tell.
4. / If a Christian did not fool behind you your father’s back and beget thee
5. / To be ashamed to be my father’s child!
It is not clear as to why being ‘ashamed to be her father’s child’ is a ‘heinous sin.’ The sin relates to Jessica’s upcoming actions, whereby she betrays her father. Thus, the line has been changed to reflect this view.
6. / I am not to his manners.
Manners most likely refers to Shylock’s somber and thrifty (or hardened) ways but it could also refer to his adherence to Jewish tradition. [See Additional Notes, 2.3.19]
7. / If as you promise, if your word be true, | I’ll soon be Christian, and e’er with you.
ACT TWO – Scene Four

Venice. Enter Gratziano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio

—Lorenzo
Nay, we will slink away at supper-time, steal during the feast
Go to my lodging, put on our disguise, And return here all within the hour.

—Gratziano
We have not made good preparation.

—Salarino
We have not spoke us as yet of torchbearers.

—Salanio
This plan will go afool if not well-made; And best, I think, abandoned altogether.

—Lorenzo
‘Tis now but four o’clock: we have two hours To get things ready.

Enter Launcelet with a letter

Launcelet, what’s the news?

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1. Like many other scenes, this scene also opens in media res, in the middle of an ongoing conversation. Here Lorenzo is discussing the preparation of a plan, which is surely the plan to steal away Jessica later that night.

2. This is a poorly conceived plan as Gratiano notes in the following line. They do not yet know if Shylock is going to be at the dinner (which they happen to find out from Launcelet later in the scene [16]). The plan might be to slink away during dinner and then return within an hour to the masque (which would follow dinner). Again, why they plan to go the dinner in the first place, and why they should return in a disguise, is not known. Perhaps the plan is tentative and changes with the arrival of Jessica’s letter, which notes that Shylock will be out for the evening.

3. preparation: securing everything needed to steal away Jessica. As part of this preparation they must also prepare their costumes.

4. ‘Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered / ‘Tis bound to fail unless it be well-planned
     vile: foul, likely to go wrong
     quaintly: noticeably; well-, carefully, with consideration
     ordered: a) planned, b) carried out

5. And better in my mind not undertook / And better yet, the plan should be abandoned.

6. This refers to the ill-conceived plan to steal away Jessica. Salanio, it seems, is more level-headed than both Lorenzo (who is foolishly acting out of love) and Gratiano, who is, well, Gratiano.

7. [Friend Launcelet, what’s the news?] It is not clear how Lorenzo would know Launcelet, or come to call him ‘friend,’ but we can suspect that his interest in Jessica—and the common method of using servants to deliver messages back and forth—would make Launcelet his ‘friend.’ Where Lorenzo and the others are meeting and how Launcelet comes upon them is unclear. Jessica instructed Launcelet to deliver the message to Lorenzo at dinner: soon at supper shalt thou see Lorenzo, who is thy new master’s guest. | Give him this letter; do it secretly. [2.3.5-7]. Here it is four o’clock, not six o’clock. [See Additional Notes, 2.4.9]
—Launcelet [handing him the letter]
And shall it please you to break the seal it shall tell you. 8

—Lorenzo
I know the handwriting° ’tis a fair hand, {I know the hand, in faith}°
And whiter than the paper ’tis writ on
Is the fair hand that writ

—Gratzianno Love-news, I think. ° [in faith]

—Launcelet
By your leave, sir.10

—Lorenzo
Where° goest thou? [Whither]

—Launcelet
Well sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup tonight with my new master the Christian. 11

—Lorenzo
Hold here, take this [gives him a coin]. Tell gentle Jessica,
I will not fail her.12 13 Speak it° privately. / Tell her

Exit Launcelet

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8. {And it shall please you to break up this, shall it seem to signify}
9. I know the hand: refers to Jessica’s handwriting.
10. / With your permission, sir, I now will leave
11. Jessica’s letter outlines her plan with a ‘go ahead’ for tonight. This confirmation, we must assume, is based upon
Jessica’s belief that her father will accept Bassanio’s invitation for dinner and be away that evening.
12. {Tell gentle Jessica | I will not fail her}
   All Launcelet knows is that Lorenzo will not fail Jessica—he knows nothing about what Lorenzo is referring to nor
anything about Lorenzo ‘coming by’ to Jessica’s house later that evening. However, in the next scene, when Launcelet is
bidding farewell to Shylock, his final words to Jessica are: Mistress, look out at window for all this: | There will come a
Christian by | Will be worth a Jewès eye. [2.5.39-42] As stated, he had no way of knowing this.
   One way to rectify this discrepancy would be to add a line whereby Lorenzo tells Launcelet something of the plan:
   Hold here, take this [gives him a coin]. Tell gentle Jessica,
   (We’ll meet as planned, beneath her balcony—)
   I will not fail her.
   The discrepancy is slight and need not be rectified since Lorenzo telling the loose-lipped Launcelot of his plan could be
more problematic.
13. What we find is that Lorenzo does fail her, that he comes an hour late [2.6.2]—a delay which, in all likelihood, would
have blown the whole plan. This delay (which he attributes to having had to finish up some business) would have given
Shylock ample time to return from dinner—unless the ‘business’ which caused his delay was to wait at Bassanio’s until he
was sure that Shylock arrived (which meant that the coast was clear).
Will you be ready for the masque tonight?¹⁴ ¹⁵ / the masquerade?  
I’ve got myself a golden torchbearer.  

—Salarino  
By Mary, I’ll get to it straight away.¹⁷  

—Salanio  
And so will I.  

—Lorenzo  
Meet me and Gratziano  
At Gratziano’s lodging in an hour.⁰  

—Salarino  
‘Tis good we do so.⁰  

Exit Salarino and Salanio  

—Gratziano  
Was not that letter from fair Jessica?  

—Lorenzo  
I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed  
How I shall take her from her father’s house,  
What gold and jewels she is furnished with,⁰ / she will bring with her  
What page’s suit she’ll wear for her disguise.⁰ ¹⁸ / she hath in readiness  
If e’er the Jew, her father, comes to heaven  
It will be for his gentle daughter’s sake,¹⁹  

¹⁴ / Go gentlemen—prepare you for the masque  
¹⁵. The Q1 text reads:  
Go Gentlemen, will you prepare you for this mask tonight,  
I am provided of a Torch-bearer.  

¹⁶. I am provided of a torchbearer  
Masquerade parties were elaborate affairs and sometimes the guests, dressed as dignitaries, would be accompanied by a torchbearer to announce their entry. Lorenzo’s reference to Jessica as his torchbearer does not indicate that she will mark his entrance at the masque but that she will illumine his life with love and beauty.  

¹⁷. {Ay, marry, I’ll be gone about it straight}  
marry: An exclamation evoking the name of Mary, Jesus’s mother. It is similar to ‘by Mary,’ or ‘by the mother of God’ and would, by extension, mean: ‘in truth, indeed, surely,’ etc.  
¹⁸. This plan is contingent upon Shylock being out of the house, which is something they are not yet sure of since the invitation to dine with Bassanio has not yet been accepted. It seems that Jessica is sure that Shylock will accept the offer (even though he is hesitant).  
¹⁹. The next three lines are odd and out of place and have no reason to come out of Lorenzo’s mouth—and these harsh lines divert and interfere with Lorenzo’s loving reverie concerning Jessica. These appear like anti-Semitic emendations—emendations, like several other in the play, that make a rude entrance at the end of several scenes or as part of a character’s exiting lines. Not only are these lines suspect (in this content) they break up the flow of the passage and force their way in as an inopportune afterthought. Hence, these words do nothing more than drag the dialogue and harm Lorenzo’s character. As these lines are misplaced—and were likely added by someone other than the author—they have been deleted. The lines, as found in Q1, read as follows:  
{And never dare misfortune cross her foot}  / And may misfortune never cross her path,  
{Unless she do it under this excuse:}  / Else it befalls her under this excuse:  
{That she is issue to a faithless Jew}  / daughter
Come, go with me; 
\textit{gives Gratziano the letter} peruse this as thou goest. 
Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer. \textsuperscript{20}

\textit{Exeunt}

\textbf{cross her foot:} obstruct her path. This refers to the inauspicious omen of tripping over something when on a journey. Here it could be applied to her ‘journey of life,’ the journey she is about to take as wife of Lorenzo.

\textbf{Unless she:} unless it, unless misfortune. Fate, destiny, and fortune—and in this case ‘misfortune’—were attributed to a goddess and female in gender. Thus she refers to the goddess of misfortune and not Jessica.

\textbf{faithless:} a) lacking faith in Christ, b) lacking truth, untrustworthy

\textsuperscript{20} As stated in a previous note, this reference to a torchbearer does not mean that Jessica is going to be Lorenzo’s torchbearer at the masque but, symbolically, that she is going to light his way. We might also assume, by way of analogy, that part of the light that Jessica will provide is the light (or brightness) of the gold she is going to gild herself with. Compare this light-giving aspect of Jessica with Portia’s light-giving in 5.1.129.
ACT TWO – Scene Five 2.5.0

Venice. Enter Shylock and Launcelot

—Shylock
Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference ‘tween old Shylock and Bassanio.
[calling] Hey Jessica! Thou shalt not stuff thyself
As thou hast done with me. [calling] Hey Jessica!
Nor sleep, and snore, and wear out all your pants
From sitting round all day. [calling louder] Hey Jessica!

—Launcelot
Hey Jessica!

—Shylock
I do not bid thee call.

—Launcelot
Your worship always
Told me I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter Jessica

—Jessica
Have you been calling me? What is your will?

—Shylock
I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
Here are my keys. But why then should I go?

1. {Thou shalt not gormandize} / Thou shall not gluttonize.
   A curious combination of a Jewish type commandment, ‘thou shalt not’ and a Christian admonition against gluttony.
2. {And sleep, and snore, and rend apparel out}
   / And sleep and snore, and wear out all your clothes / And wear out clothes from sitting ‘round all day.
   / And sleep and snore and wear out the bottom | Of pants from sitting on them all day long.
   / And sleep, and wear out the seat of your pants | From all your sitting on them all the day.
   rend: this terms usually implies tearing. In this context—where Launcelot sleeps and snores on the job—rend would imply the wearing out of clothes through sitting on them all day, thinning the fabric—especially at the seat of one’s pants—making them more prone to tears and rips.
3. { Shy: And sleep and snore and rend apparel out
   Why Jessica, I say!
   Launc: Why Jessica!
   Launc: Your worship was wont to tell me I could do nothing without bidding. }
I am not bid for love. They flatter me. ⁴ ⁵
But yet I’ll go in spite,⁶ to feed upon {hate}
The wasteful⁷ Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Care for⁸ my house. I am right loathe to go;
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest⁹ / in my mind
For I did dream of money-bags last night⁰—⁷ {tonight}
(A sign that augurs some upcoming loss.)¹⁰ ⁸ / some loss in the future

—Launcelet
I beseech you, sir, go. My young master
Doth expect your reproach.⁹

—Shylock
As I expect his.¹⁰ {So do I his}

—Launcelet
And they are planning something.¹⁰ I will not say you shall see a masquerade party¹¹ but if you do, then it was not for nothing that⁰ my nose fell a-bleeding on Black⁰ Monday last, at six o’clock i’th’morning, falling out that year on Ash Wednesday, the fourth year in the afternoon.¹² / then it must have been because // Easter

—Shylock
What, there’s a masque?² Hear you me, Jessica, {What, are there masques?} / A masquerade?
Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum

---

4. {I am not bid for love. They flatter me}.
   / I am not bid for love. They seek to flatter me—and nothing more.
5. {I am not bid for love. They (only seek) To flatter me. (to soften up the Jew)}.
6. It is odd that, having previously said to Bassanio, ‘I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you’[1.3.34], Shylock is now going to eat with him. His motivations, therefore, to eat with Bassanio—and go against his word—must be quite strong. Later he states that he is going ‘in hate’ to try and eat a lot (and therefore bankrupt the Christian) which is a comical excuse. (And this may be the same reasoning by which he gave his gormandizing servant to Bassanio). By all indications, however, Shylock is going because Antonio’s closest friend, Bassanio, has offered him something by way of friendship (whereas, in the past, all he received from Antonio was scorn); Shylock also wants to be placed on an equal status with the Christians and wants Antonio to see him (Shylock) being commended by Bassanio.
7. During Elizabethan times, a person’s dreams were thought to portend an opposite occurrence in real life. Hence, Shylock’s dream of money-bags (bags filled with money) portends its opposite—a loss of money. The contemporary understanding of dreams holds that the content of person’s dream corresponds to some waking state occurrence rather than the opposite.
8. To realize the original meaning, an additional line was added.
   / A sign which tells me of some loss to come. / An omen telling me of some great loss
   / And all the bags were empty of their gold.
9. reproach (scolding, blame): error for approach. Shylock understands the term intended (approach) yet responds in kind to the word reproach.
10. {And they have conspired together}
11. {a masque}
12. Lancelot makes a confused and nonsensical prediction (using various signs and omens) as a way to mock—and also dismiss the validity of—Shylock’s ill-boding dream. We have the impression that Launcelet is aware of the upcoming plan, which is contingent upon Shylock attending the feast, and therefore he does his best to get Shylock to accept the invitation.
And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife, \textsuperscript{13}
Do not climb you up to the windows then, \textsuperscript{14}
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished\textsuperscript{o} faces:\textsuperscript{o} \(/,\) painted // colored masks
But plug\textsuperscript{a} my house’s ears—I mean my casements.\textsuperscript{o} \(\{\text{stop}\} \//\) windows
Let not the sound of mindless\textsuperscript{o} fopp’ry\textsuperscript{o} enter
My somber house. . . By Jacob’s staff \textsuperscript{15} I swear
I have no mind\textsuperscript{o} of feasting forth\textsuperscript{o} tonight,
But I will go. \textsuperscript{16}  \(\{\text{To Launcelet}\} \) Go you before me, then, \textsuperscript{17}
Say I will come.

—Launcelet  I will go before, sir.
\(\{\text{aside to Jessica}\}\)  Mistress, look out the window for all this:
There will come a Christian by / There a Christian will come by,
Will be worth a Jewess eye / Worthy of a Jewess’ eye.

Exit

—Shylock
What says that fool of Hagar’s offspring, ha? \textsuperscript{18}

—Jessica
His words were, ‘farewell mistress’—nothing more.

—Shylock

\textsuperscript{13}  / And the vile squeals of the wry-necked fife-player
\(\text{fife}:\) a small, shrill-toned musical instrument resembling a flute and used mainly with drums to make music which would accompany marching. \textit{Fife} as well as \textit{drum} (mentioned in the previous line) could refer to the instrument or the musician playing the instrument. Hence, \textit{drum} would be a reference to ‘a drummer’ and \textit{fife} to ‘a fife-player.’
\(\text{wry-necked fife}:\) refers to the image of a flute player who twists his neck and hold his head awry (bent to one side) while playing. McDonnell, however, believes that \textit{the squealing of the wry-necked fife} might indicate the sound of the \textit{wry neck}, a bird with a high-pitched call which writhes its head and neck, though this interpretation is a stretch.  (In current literature, this line is often misquoted as: ‘the vile \textit{squeaking} of the wry-necked fife.’)

\textsuperscript{14}  / Do not arise and look ye out the window // Don’t climb you up to the windows to look

\textsuperscript{15}  / This is not a Jewish saying. Jacob’s thrift, however, is a characteristic admired by Shylock, and Shylock often identifies with this biblical character. A Jacob’s staff referred to a pole which provided a firm foundation for a compass or astronomical instrument. Thus, “by Jacob’s staff” would mean, “by that which supports me,” or more loosely, “by my gut feeling.”

\textsuperscript{16}  / Unless out of Bassanio’s gratitude for his having generously loaned him the money, gratis. The feast may be in honor of Shylock. Moreover, we do not know why Shylock consents to go, especially after having made the point, earlier that day, that he (as a Jew) would not eat with a Christian.

\textsuperscript{17}  / / Don’t climb you up to the windows to look

\textsuperscript{18}  / See Additional Notes, 2.6.38

\(\text{sirrah}:\) a low (though not disparaging) term which is often used in reference to a servant. Portia also uses the term when addressing her servants \[1.2.129\]

\(\text{Hagar’s offspring}:\) a negative reference to Ishmael, the foolish son of Abrahams’s Egyptian concubine, Hagar. Hagar (and her son) left Abraham’s house, complaining of his harsh treatment, and later they became outcasts. \[\text{Genesis 21:9-21}\]  [See Additional Note, 2.5.43]
The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder. Snail-slow in working, and he sleeps by day More than the wildcat. Drones that do not work Stay not in my hive. Thus I part with him— Now to the Christian so he can help waste His borrowed purse. Well Jessica, go in, Perhaps I will return immediately. Do as I bid and shut doors after you: Fast bind, fast find— A proverb never stale in a thrifty mind.

Exit

—Jessica
Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed, I have a husband, you a daughter lost.

Exit, opposite door

19. patch: dolt, fool, clown. A term referring to the motley or ‘patchwork’ garb of professional fools. It might also refer to someone as worthless as a patch of cloth. The term is used in A Midsummer’s Night Dream and The Comedy of Errors.
20. {Drones hive not with me}
21. {To one that I would have him help waste} / And now to one with whom he can help waste} / Now to the Christian, so to help him waste
22. This is a mild threat for Jessica to stay put.
23. This common proverb, used from the fifteenth century onwards, means: ‘if you lock things up, then you will be able to keep hold of them.’ These are Shylock’s last words to his daughter—and they are mistaken. It turns out that the very opposite is true. [See Additional Notes, 2.6. 54]
24. {Farewell; and if my fortune be not crossed} I have a father, you a daughter lost.

I have a father: refers to Jessica’s gaining a husband (who will take care of her like a new father); it could also indicate her gaining a ‘holy Father,’ through her marriage and conversion to Christianity, which involves the loss of her Jewish father and heritage.

crossed: she is hoping that her fortune be not crossed (i.e., that nothing will cross, thwart, or come in the way of her plan to marry Lorenzo and become a Christian). As it turns out, her fortune is crossed in that she is converting to Christianity, symbolized by the cross.
ACT TWO – Scene Six

Venice. Enter the maskers, Gratiano, Salarino, and Salanio.  

—Gratiano
This is the window under which Lorenzo Desired us to wait.

—Salarino  His hour is past.

—Gratiano
It is a marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever-run before the clock.

—Salarino
O, ten times faster fly the doves of Venus
To seal love’s bond new made than they are wont
To keep their well-intentioned vows intact.

1. The stage heading in Q1 reads: ‘Enter the maskers, Gratiano and Salarino.’ This stage heading is somewhat confusing, both in its reference to Salarino (which seems to indicate Salario and not Salarino) and to ‘the maskers,’ which appears before the character names. Such an anomaly suggests an ad hoc change in the original text. We can assume that the original heading may have read ‘Enter maskers’ which indicated the entrance of Gratiano, Salarino, and Salanio. Thus, it is likely that a diligent typesetter, wanting to ‘clarify’ the text, later added the names of Gratiano and Salarino to the heading. The mistaken spelling of Salarino suggests that this name was not part of the original heading (but added later). Thus, with this ‘partial’ typesetter addition—the addition of Salarino and not Salarino and Salanio—most editors assume that Salanio (because he is not specifically listed) is absent from the scene. This, however, is unlikely since Salarino and Salanio were both part of the original planning and both, up til now, have always appeared together. The scene can be staged with one or both Sals present. In keeping with the prior action of the play, and the fact that Salarino and Salanio always appear together, both Salarino and Salanio are included in the scene. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.0]

2. The lines in Q1 appear as follows:
   Gratiano: Desired us to make stand.
   Salarino: His hour is almost past.
   Gratiano: And ‘tis that he comes so late
   / And ‘tis that he comes so late

3. Venus’ pigeons: May refer to the pigeons that draw Venus’s chariot (or carry Venus) though this image is ‘very odd’ and not consistent with any known mythology. Warburton holds that the original may have read Venus’ widgeons (which refers to a kind of duck and suggests a wayward and silly bird) though such an emendation would offer no improvement upon the original. Most agree that the subject (the one who seals love’s bond) refers to Venus and not to the pigeons that draw her. All said, Venus’ pigeons probably refers neither to Venus nor her pigeons but should be taken as a metaphor for a somewhat inconsistent lover (a pigeon) who is smitten by love (Venus) and who runs fast to obtain the object of his desire.

4. {To keep obligèd faith unforfeited.} 
   obligèd: pledged, obligated
   Salarino is claiming that lovers are very quick to enter a new bond of love (and make all kinds of pledges)—rushing in like the doves of Venus—yet are just as quick to break those same vows (when some other love interest emerges).

[See Additional Notes, 2.6.7]
—Gratziano
That ever holds.° Who riseth from a feast
With the keen° hunger of one sitting down? 5
Where is the horse that doth gallop° again
Another lap° with the unbated fire°
That he did pace the first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased° than enjoyed.
How like a young man° or a prodigal
The bannered° ship° leaves from her native bay; 7
Hugged and escorted° by the forceful wind; 8
How like the prodigal doth she return
With over-weathered° ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggared by the forceful° wind!

Enter Lorenzo

—Salanio 9
Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter.

—Lorenzo
Sweet friends, your patience for° my long delay.°
Not I, but my affairs have made you wait:°¹⁰
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives°
Then I will watch as long for you. Approach.°
Here dwells my father¹¹ Jew. [calling] Hey!° Who’s within?

Enter Jessica above, dressed as a boy

—Jessica
Who are you? Tell me for more certainty
Although° I’ll swear that I do know your voice.°

5. / With the keen appetite that he sits down? / With the same hunger as when he sat down?
6. / The proud vessel / The ship so proud
7. {The scarfed bark puts from her native bay} / The decorated ship leaves from her bay
   scarfed: refers to something wrapped or adorned with streaming banners, such as the side of a ship (bark) decorated
   with flags and steamers while it makes a glorious departure from her native port.
8. {the strumpet wind} / a good, strong wind
   strumpet: refers to something inconsistent, something promising yet unreliable. The term brings to fore the metaphor
   of the Prodigal Son and the prostitutes (strumpets) upon whom he wasted his fortune. Here the promising wind is quick to
   bring one’s ship out to sea and, later, it is that same wind that brings the ship to ruin.
9. In Q1 this speech heading is abbreviated as ‘Sal.’ This could indicate either Salarino or Salanio (depending on which
   one is listed in the stage heading). Since both characters are present in the scene, and since both characters should have
   lines, Salanio is given this line. In terms of staging, Gratiano and Salarino might be lounging around, talking about the
   pigeons of Venus, while Salanio, who is not talking, first notices—and announces—Lorenzo’s arrival.
10. Such tardiness would put this whole plan in jeopardy since the long delay would give Shylock ample time to return
    from dinner before Lorenzo’s arrival. What more pressing affairs could have caused Lorenzo to be so late? Perhaps the
    delay was brought about by poor planning and last minute demands or because Lorenzo was waiting at Bassanio’s feast to
    make sure Shylock was well situated before he departed.
—Lorenzo
Lorenzo—and thy⁰ love.

—Jessica
Jessica, surely, and my love indeed—¹²
The one I love so much¹⁰ And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

—Lorenzo
Heaven and my thoughts are witness that thou art.

—Jessica
Here, catch this casket—it is worth the pains.¹³
I’m glad ’tis night so you don’t look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my appearance.⁰
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty¹⁵ follies they themselves commit;⁰
For if they could Cupid¹⁶ himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.¹⁷

—Lorenzo
Come down,⁰ for you must be my torchbearer.¹⁸

—Jessica
What, must I hold a candle⁰ to my shames?
They are, good sooth, already too⁰ too light.¹⁹

¹². Lorenzo certainly, my love indeed
¹³. Stage direction: a) she throws down the chest filled with gold—which is painfully caught or b) she is about to throw down the chest but is urged by the group, gesturing “no,” to carry it down instead.
¹⁴. exchange: change of appearance (into a boy), transfiguration
¹⁵. {pretty} / artful / petty > comedic, ridiculous
¹⁶. Cupid, god of love, is often depicted as blind thus conveying the sense that love is blind, that it obeys the heart and not outer condition. If, however, Cupid could see Jessica dressed as a boy it would be enough to make him blush.
¹⁷. / To see the way I’ve changed into a boy.
¹⁸. Lorenzo is using this image figuratively, as per the imagery enlisted in 2.4.22:39. He is saying, ‘you must be the one who brings light and radiance into my life; your light must lead my way in the world.’ This is in contradiction to Jessica’s wish to remain hidden under the cover of night.
¹⁹. {They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light} / They are, good heavens, already too light.
   (my shames are) . . . too too light: a) much too apparent, evident, in full view; b) immodest, unethical.
   Light can also mean being unfaithful (such as someone who is light in keeping her vows) though this is unlikely Jessica’s intended meaning. Later in the play (5.1.129) we hear Portia using the term light (meaning “unfaithful”) in this sense: Let me give light, but let me know be light: | For a light wife doth make a heavy husband.
   good sooth: good truth. In sooth means, ‘in truth,’ “to tell you honestly,” whereas good sooth is more akin to a light swearing, such as ‘good heavens,’ ‘good God,’ or ‘by God.’
Why, ‘tis love’s nature to remain in hiding, 20
And I⁰ should be concealed.⁰

—Lorenzo

So are you, sweet,
E’en 21 in the lovely⁰ garnish⁰ of a boy.
But come at once (and tarry you no further), 23
For the cov’ring of night soon runs away⁰ 24
And we are stayed for⁰ at Bassanio’s feast. 25

—Jessicca

I will make fast the doors, and guild myself 26
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit above

—Gratziano

Now, by my word,⁰ she’s more gentile than Jew.  {by my hood} / I do swear

—Lorenzo

You can berate me if I do not love her 27
For she is wise—if I can be the judge;⁰  {if I can judge of her}

20. {Why, ‘tis an office of discovery, love,} / a matter / a function
   / Why, love is best when kept behind close doors.
   Jessica is here reflecting some of her father’s manner, desiring to keep things hidden behind closed doors.

21. {Even} To preserve the iambic meter, even would be pronounced as e’en.

22. lowly: Q1 has lovely, which is an old spelling of lowly but could also be read as lovely. Lowly does not quite fit, since the garb of a boy is not lowly: lovely ties in more closely with sweet, and would be said in playful jest, especially in light of Jessica’s embarrassment.

23. {But come at once}. The line is truncated for no apparent reason and is likely in error. In Q1, these four syllables are added to the end of the previous line, thus producing a line with seven iambs (as opposed to five): {Even in the lovely garnish of a boy, but come at once}. This line could be preserved in its truncated form or emended with three additional iambs: / But come at once (and make no more delays)

24. {For the close night doth play the runaway} / The cov’ring night doth quickly run away
   close: covered, secret; darkness
   play the runaway: is fading quickly, is speeding by. This may also be a reference to Jessica, who is running away.
   This line generally refers to the cover of night playing the part of a runaway (and will soon be gone) but could also mean that the cover of night plays in favor of the runaway.

25. It seems that someone at Bassanio’s feast is waiting for them. Thus they are urged to hurry in order to make a clean getaway before arousing suspicion (by their absence at the masque).
   stayed for: waited for. The term stay (wait) also appears in 59 (Our masquing mates by this time for us stay) and 63 (‘Tis nine o’clock: our friends all stay for you). [See Additional Notes, 2.6.48]

26. guild myself: provide myself with more ducats. It also carries the implication of dressing or gilding herself with more gold in the same way that an ornament might be gilded with gold.
   Here again we see a conflict in Jessica: she wants to remain hidden (and not hold a candle to her shame), she wants her affections to remain behind closed doors, yet here she is gilding herself in gold and thereby putting herself in a position to be seen.

27. {Beshrew me but I love her heartily} /
   Forswear me if she is not my beloved / Reprove me but with all my heart I love her
   Beshrew me: A mild swear akin to ‘curse me’ > derived from the injury that comes from the bite of a shrew.
   but: if not, if I don’t > “Let me be cursed (bitten by a shrew) if I don’t love her heartily”
And fair she is—if that mine eyes be true;
And true she is—as she hath proved herself;
And therefore, like herself—wise, fair, and true—
Shall she be carried in my constant soul.

Enter Jessica

What, beauty art thou! Gentlemen, away,
Let us make ground awhile the maskers play.

Exeunt Lorenzo, Jessica, Salarino, and Salanio

Enter Antonio

—Antonio
Who’s there?

—Gratziano
Signior Antonio?

—Antonio

28. / Shall she be carried, always, in my soul.
30. {What, art thou come! On gentlemen, away.} / What beauty has come
   / What beauty has come! Gentlemen away
   / What beauty has come! Gentlemen away
   on gentlemen away: Q1 has {What, art thou come, on gentleman away} which many editions emend in the form of a question: ‘What, art thou come? On, gentleman, away!’ But who does the term “gentleman” (not gentlemen”) refer to? Jessica is a boy, not a gentleman. F1 has: ‘On gentleman, away’ which is more likely, as this term could refer to Salarino and Salanio, and also include Jessica in jest.
31. {What, art thou come! On, gentlemen, away | Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.} / . . . On gentlemen, away | Let’s go before we cause too much dismay
   / . . . On gentlemen, let’s go | Let us get far before our friend’s e’er know.
   masquing mates: fellow party-goers who will be at Bassanio’s masquerade party. The masquing mates may be waiting for this group to arrive—yet it is unlikely that Lorenzo is going to the ball to meet them. The command ‘on gentlemen’ is more likely a prompting (along with ‘For the close of night doth play the runaway’) that they must make their getaway before their masquing mates notice they are not at the feast (and go out looking for them). Despite Lorenzo’s excitement about having a torchbearer (someone to herald his entrance) the masque is the last place they want to be seen; the plan is to exit the city, under cover of night, while everyone in distracted with the masque. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.59]
32. In a later scene [2.8] Salarino tells Salanio of Bassanio’s departure and so he alone (and not Salanio) must have gotten off the gondola and proceeded to the masque. Meanwhile Salanio helped Lorenzo and Jessica steal away from Venice (while everyone was busy with the masque).
   Lorenzo’s last line, ‘Our masquing mates by this time for us stay,’ should be taken as an indication to make haste, since ‘by this time’ their masquing mates (friends at the party) are waiting for their arrival and, as the hour grows late, they might go out looking for them, which might draw notice and suspicion. As it turns out, everyone at the masque became acutely aware that Grattiano was missing because 20 men were sent out in search of him.
33. The timing of Antonio’s arrival, and his meeting with Grattiano near Shylock’s house, is amiss. Antonio would not be going out in search of Grattiano with Bassanio’s departure so imminent (for Antonio had already sent out 20 men to find him). Rather, Antonio would be eking out his time with Bassanio. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.60]
Fie° Gratziano! Where are all the rest? 34
{Tis nine o’clock; our friends all stay° for you.
No masque tonight, the wind has come about, 35
And now Bassanio is° aboard his ship. 36
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.° 37

—Gratziano
I’m glad of it:° I seek° no more delight,
Than to be under sail and gone tonight. 38

Exeunt 39

34. {where are all the rest?} / where is everyone?
We are not sure whom Antonio is referring to when he says ‘all the rest.’ He might be inquiring about Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio, whom Antonio believed was with Gratziano all this time (and may have made for his delay) but Antonio, curiously, finds Gratziano all alone.

35. {No masque tonight, the wind is come about.} / No masque for you tonight—the wind has come
no masque tonight: one reading of this could indicate that the masquerade party, planned for that night, has been cancelled (due to Bassanio’s departure) or that the masque was already over—both scenarios of which are unlikely. More likely, no masque tonight refers to no masque for Gratziano, as he must set sail immediately. It could also be played as a literal reference to the mask that Gratziano is wearing (which Antonio pulls off when he says no masque tonight—thus implying that Gratziano should take off the mask he is wearing, stop his fun and games, and attend to the task of readying himself for departure.

the wind is come about: the wind has turned favorable (which now allows Bassanio to make a swift departure to Belmont). From the foregoing action it appears that Bassanio borrows the money from Shylock in the morning, makes preparations in the afternoon, puts on a feast in the evening, and intends to depart the next day. Yet, the winds having turned favorable (and Bassanio impatiently wanting to get to Belmont without delay) he decides to depart immediately—right in the middle of his own feast. Owing to the fact that Portia has many known suitors, and any delay in Bassanio’s trip to Belmont would diminish his chances of winning here, an immediate departure (the very same day as he acquires the money) is to be expected. Nor does Bassanio tarry a while in Belmont, as suggested by Portia: he moves to making a choice the day he arrives. The time frame implicated by the action is, of course, not consistent with Shylock’s bond, which is for three months; Bassanio hears of the expiration of Shylock’s bond the very day he arrives in Belmont.

36. {Bassanio presently will go aboard} / Bassanio now awaits aboard his ship / And now Bassanio’s ship will go abroad
37. Antonio says that the wind has come about—which prompts Bassanio to make a hasty departure, right in the middle of the party he is throwing—yet wind is not a factor in travel to Belmont: throughout the play, people go back and forth between Venice and Belmont without any need of favorable wind. Bassanio would have left at the first available opportunity, wind or no wind. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.66]

38. Gratziano, the ultimate party man, would have little reason to delight upon hearing that the masque was cancelled unless there was something greater he desired, which could only be found on Belmont.

39. In the Kean production of 1858, Jessica is swept away by Lorenzo and departs in a whirl of carnival figures. Straight after, Shylock makes an entrance and a slow walk across the stage; he then knocks twice on the door to his house and there is no answer. A long silence follows and then the curtain falls. Some productions have Shylock enter his house, and sensing the ill-brood of Jessica’s absence, cries out her name—with no answer.
ACT TWO - Scene Seven

Portia’s house at Belmont.
A flourish of cornetts. \(^1\) Enter Portia and the Prince of Morocco, with their attendants

—Portia [to servant]
Go, draw aside the curtains and disclose\(^\circ\) / discover / reveal
The triple\(^\circ\) caskets for this noble prince.

The curtains are drawn aside and three caskets are revealed

Now make your choice.

The Prince examines each one

—Morocco
The first of gold, which\(^\circ\) this inscription bears: \(^2\) / who
‗Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.‘
The second, silver, which this promise carries:
‗Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.‘
The third, dull lead, with warning all\(^\circ\) as blunt:
‗Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.‘ \(^3\)
[to Portia] How shall I know if I do chose the right? \(^\circ\) / right one

—Portia
The one of them contains my picture, Prince;
If you choose that, then all of mine is yours. \(^\circ\) / then I am yours withal

—Morocco
Some god direct my judgement. Let me see—
I will survey\(^\circ\) th’inscriptions once\(^\circ\) again. / inspect / back
What says this leaden casket?
‗Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.‘
Must give, for what? For lead? Hazard\(^\circ\) for lead? / Risk all
This casket threatens: Men that\(^\circ\) hazard all / who

\(^1\) Some editors, following Capell, add the stage direction here to signify Morocco’s entrance. However, Morocco’s arrival has already been announced, and he is already in residence. Some editors also add flourish of cornetts at the end of the scene, with Morocco’s exit, which is also unlikely.

\(^2\) / The first of gold, which offers\(^\circ\) this inscription: / presenting / deliv’ring

\(^3\) The inscriptions on the caskets, found in the source story, Geśta Romanorum, (1595), are as follows:

Gold: Who so chooseth me shall find what he deserves.
Silver: Who so chooseth me shall find what his nature desires.
Lead: Who so chooseth me shall find what God has disposed for him. [See Additional Notes, 2.7.9]

\(^4\) withal: “with all.” I am yours withal; I am all yours, all of what is mine is yours / If you chose that, then I am wholly yours
Do so in hope of some untoward advantage.  
A golden mind stoops not to petty schemes.  
I'll neither give nor hazard all for lead.  
What says the silver with her virgin hue?  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'  
As much as he deserves.  Pause there Morocco  
And weigh thy value with an even hand.  
If thou be valued by thine worthiness,
Thou dost deserve enough—and yet 'enough'  
May not extend so far as to the lady.

And yet to be afraid of my deserving
Would be a weak disabling of myself.  
'As much as I deserve'—why, that's the lady!  
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding—
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no further, but chose here?
Let's see, once more, this saying 'graved in gold:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
Why that's the lady! All the world desires her.
From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
The Persian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For every prince to come and view fair Portia.

The wat'ry kingdom whose high-reaching wave
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar

5. {Do it in hope of fair advantages}
   **fair advantages**: gaining something not fully deserved  
   / Do so in hope of quick and feeble gain
6. {A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross}
   **shows of dross**: worthless displays
7. **virgin hue**: 'silver is the color of the moon, and Diana, the virgin goddess, is the moon's goddess.' (Kittredge)
8. **estimation** / reputation / own repute
9. / If estimated by mine worthiness | I do deserve enough
10. / Would be to lower and debase myself / Would be to weaken and debase my value
11. **qualities of breeding**: more suggestive of Arabian horses than a royal bloodline. This is an image favored by Morocco but may be ill-suited for European sentiments.
12. **this shrine**: a container for the relics (and/or bones) of a saint. Morocco refers to the Portia as a **shrine**—an object of worship—but, realizing that a shrine may also refer to a tomb, which contains a dead saint, quickly corrects himself with a modifier, calling Portia, a 'mortal breathing saint.'
13. **the Persian deserts and vasty wilds** / The unrelenting deserts and vast wilds
14. **the wat'ry kingdom, whose high-reaching wave** / raging ocean   
   **ambitious head** / high-reaching waves
15. **spits**: the image of a wave's crest spewing water into the air
16. **is no bar** / has no chance / is no barrier
   / cannot slow / cannot stymie | Nor stop
To stop these dauntless suitors, who but leap
Across her vast expanse, as o’er a brook,
To catch one sight of the fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is’t like that lead contains her? ‘Twere damnation
To think so base a thought. It is too gross
That she be wrapped in common cerecloth
Like one who’s buried in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she’s immured
Which holds one-tenth the value of tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold; but that’s insculpted upon
The surface—here an angel lies within!
I will stop here—deliver me the key;
Here I do choose and thrive as I may be.

—Portia
There, take it, prince. And if my form lie there,
Then I am yours.

Morocco unlocks the golden casket

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17. foreign spirits: men of courage and determination (who hail from foreign lands).
18. { As o’er a book to see fair Portia }
19. / It is revolting / obscene / repugnant / unthinkable
20. { To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave }
   cerecloth: waxed cloth that corpses were wrapped in for burial
   obscure: a) dark, distant b) common, undistinguished, forgotten
   It is an insult to think that she (her image) could be found in lead or wrapped in a wax cerecloth, both of which suggest the status of a commoner—one who gets buried in an obscure or unmarked grave.
21. insculpted upon: engraved upon the surface. This obscure word is found in the English translation of Gesta Romanorum, the source from which the Author borrowed the casket story: ‘The third vessel was made of lead, full within of precious stones, and thereupon was insculpt this posey: Who so chooseth me, shall find what God has disposed for him.’ [See Additional Notes, 2.7.9]
22. / Could e’er be set in something worse than gold. / Was ever set
   There is a coin in England, stamped in gold, / They have
   That bears the figure of a rad’ant angel
   But that’s insculped on* the outer surface; / engraved upon
23. It is the picture of Portia, representing Portia, which lies within.
24. / Here I do choose, deliver me the key | And let my fortune fall as it may be.
   / Deliver me the key and straight away | Here do I choose and prosper as I may
25. The original reads:
   {Stamped in gold, but that’s insculped upon;
   But here an angel in a golden bed
   Lies all within. Deliver me the key.
   Here I do choose, and thrive as I may.}

The word key may have been pronounced kay and thus the intent of the original was for Morocco’s speech to end in a final rhyme. Bassanio’s speech before the caskets ended in a rhyme scheme but not Arragon’s: Arragon’s last line ends with here, rhyming with Portia’s next line, ending with there. With Morocco, we find Portia’s first line (after Morocco chooses) ending with there with Morroco’s following line ending with here.
Morocco

O hell! What have we here?
A hideous skull, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll. I’ll read the writing:

All that glitters is not gold;
Often have your heard that told.
Many a man his life hath sold,
For the outside to behold,
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled—
Fair you well, your suit is cold.

’Tis cold indeed, and labor lost.
Now farewell heat and welcome frost.
Portia I have too grieved a heart
For tedious leave, and so I part.

Exit with his attendants

—Portia
A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go—
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

Exeunt

26. Q1 reads: Gilded timber do worms enfold. To rectify the meter, most editions follow Johnson’s emendation and change timber to tombs. Rowe, however corrects the meter by replacing timber with wood—which is close in meaning to the supposed original. Timber refers to a wood coffin that is gilded on the outside but which decays and soon becomes enfolded with worms. A tomb (which is associated with stone) is unlikely to be gilded or enfolded with worms. Thus tombs equals timber which equals coffin.

27. {Cold indeed and labour lost | Then farewell heat, and welcome frost}

28. This is a paraphrased inversion of the old proverb, ‘Farewell, frost’: ‘Therefore are you so foule, and so, farewell, frost.’ (Lilly’s Mother Bombie); “Farewell, frost, will you needes be gone” (Wapull’s Tyde Taryeth No Man, 1576)

29. {Portia, adieu, I have too grieved a heart: | To take a tedious leave, thus losers part.}

30. Some editions add flourish of cornets as part of this stage direction. This direction is not found in any of the quartos. Morocco has just lost the contest and is leaving in disgrace—not the kind of exit one would want to herald with cornets. If a flourish of cornets was added here, it would have to be unconvincing, deflated, and, comedic—and perhaps quashed in midstream by a sensitive gentleman from Portia’s train.

31. complexion: most notably refers to Morocco’s dark complexion (and Portia’s dislike of it). If one wants to interpret this in a politically correct way, the reference could refer to Morocco’s manner or disposition (as the term complexion can also have this meaning, as it does in [3.1.28]).
ACT TWO - Scene Eight 2.8.0

Venice. Enter Salarino and Salanio. 1

—Salarino
Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail,
With him is Gratiano gone along. / And Gratiano’s gone along with him
I’m sure Lorenzo is not on their ship. o / has not gone with them

—Saliano
The villain Jew with outcries roused o the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio’s ship. 2

—Salarino
He came too late; the ship was under sail. o / had just left port
But there the Duke was giv’n o to understand
That seen together, in a gondola,
Were young Lorenzo and his amorous love. o 3 / his Jessica
Besides, Antonio assured o the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship. 4

—Saliano
I never heard an outburst o so confused,
So strange, outlandish, 9 and so oddly spoke o 5 / outrageous / excessive // dissident
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
[mimicking] ‘My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats! 6
Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol’n from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, 7
Stol’n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!

1. This portion of the text, where the two Sal are talking to each other (and filling in crucial details about the main characters) shows why two similar characters were added to the text (as part of a later draft). The function of these two characters has no bearing on the action of the play; their function is to inform the audience with respect to unseen action involving the main characters.  [For an further discussion of the names, See Additional Notes, 2.8.0]

2. Only someone of considerable influence (and in utter desperation) could wake the Duke and summon him from his house to investigate a minor incident.

3. / That someone saw Lorenzo, and his love | Jessica, fleeing in a gondola.

4. / That they were not aboard Bassanio’s ship

5. so oddly spoke: / so variable / conflicted, out of whack, disparate, discordant

6. my Christian ducats: this line seems to be part of Shylock’s repetitive, somewhat incoherent, free-association rant about his daughter: ‘My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter! Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!}. Since it follows the line, “Fled with a Christian” it likely means that his ducats have also fled with a Christian and now are ducats possessed by a Christian. This line echoes a line found in Marlow’s play, The Jew of Malta. [See Additional Note, 2.8.15].

7. two rich and precious stones: Later there is a reference to a diamond purchased in Frankfort for 2000 ducats [3.1.80] but we do not know what the second stone might be; it could be the turquoise ring, which Shylock references later, but it is unlikely that he would refer to the ring as a precious stone.
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!'

—Salarino

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him
Crying, ‘His stones, his daughter, and his ducats!’

—Salarino

Let good Antonio look to keep his day.°
Or he shall pay for this.

—Salarino     Ay,° well remembered°—
I conversed° with a Frenchman yesterday
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part°
The French and English,° there did overturn°
A vessel of our country, fraught with riches.°
I thought about° Antonio when he told me,°
And wished in silence that it were not his.

—Salarino

You’re° best to tell Antonio what you hear;°
Yet do it gently, else it° may grieve him.

—Salarino

A kinder gentleman treads not° this earth:
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.°
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return. Antonio said, ‘Do not;°
Rush not your heart° for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay until the time has fully ripened.°
As for the Jew’s bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind or heart:°
Be joyous° and employ° your chiefest° thoughts°

8. / England and France  
9. / I thought it might be good Antonio’s ship  
10. From this account we understand that Salarino was present at Bassanio’s departure while Salanio was not.  
11. (Of his return. He answered, ‘Do not so’)  
12. slumber not business: don’t rush or hurry with your affairs  
   slumber not business: ‘don’t sleep on the job’; be attentive to the task at hand. In modern English, the term slumber is readily recognized (and would be understood in the context of Antonio’s statement) whereas the term slubber is not. This uncommon term might bring up associations with such words as slobber or blubber.  
13. (But stay the very ripening of the time)  
14. / Be joyous; let your only° concern be // foremost
To courtship and such fair ostents of love

As shall most fittingly become you there.
And then, right there, his eyes aflame with tears,
He turned his face and put his arms around him.
And with affection, so fully displayed,
He kissed Bassanio’s cheek, and so they parted.

—Salanio

His only love in this world is for him.

I pray thee, let us go and find Antonio to find him out.

To quicken his embraced heaviness

With some delight or other.

—Salarino

So we shall.

Exeunt

---

15. {To courtship and such fair ostents of love}

fair ostents of love: / fair displays of love / fair showings of love

ostent: a shortened form of ostentation. Ostents, as used here, means to show or display, whereas the term ostentation carries the meaning of a grand, pompous, or even pretentious display.

16. / As shall arise in your heart when you’re there

At this point, Antonio still believes that Bassanio is going to Belmont in order to win Portia in a conventional scenario, which would involve wooing and courtship, and ‘fair ostents of love,’ that, in order to fully ripen, might takes days, weeks, or even months. Thus, Antonio is putting Bassanio’s needs, and his desire to woo Portia, above his very life. Antonio was never told of the true nature of Bassanio’s venture which involved a chance drawing of caskets not a typical courtship. (As Bassanio already knew, he would not spend even a day showing fair ostents of love to Portia; he would choose a casket the day he arrived in Belmont.)

18. / Turning his face, he put his hand behind him

This image painted by Salarino suggests that Antonio says ‘good-bye’ to Bassanio and then puts his hand behind him in an affectation, half-embrace. Alternatively, it might indicate that Antonio says ‘good-bye’ to Bassanio, turns his face to go, but wanting one final touch, Antonio (without looking back) puts his hand behind himself, and reaches back to touch Bassanio. The first image suggests that Antonio half-embraces Bassanio and then wrings his hand; the second image suggests that Antonio reaches back and wrings Bassanio’s hand.

19. / And with affection wondrous sensible

wondrous sensible: amazingly evident (to the senses)

20. / He wrung Bassanio’s hand, and so they parted

It seems unlikely that this ‘amazingly evident display of affection’ would culminate with a regular handshake, after such displays as hugging and kissing were over. More likely, it indicates one, last desperate attempt to touch Bassanio, however so slight, by Antonio. To simplify this image, the handshake was replaced with a kiss.

22. / I think he only loves the world for him

/ I think his only love in life is him. / I think Bassanio is the world to him.

23. / And steal the sorrow he doth now embrace
ACT TWO - Scene Nine  2.9.0

  Belmont. Enter Nerissa and a Servant

——Nerissa
Quickly, I pray thee—draw the curtain straight.\(^1\) / open
The Prince of Arragon has ta’en his oath
And comes at once to make his choice of caskets. \(^2\)

  *A servant draws back the curtain, revealing the three caskets.*
  [\textit{A flourish of cornetts.}]
  *Enter the Prince of Arragon, Portia, and attendants*

——Portia
Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.
If you chose that wherein my picture’s found, \(^3\) [I am contained]
Straightaway shall we take\(^4\) our nuptial vows. \[Then straightaway we’ll take more speech, my lord\]
But should you fail, without another word, \(^6\)
My lord, you must depart\(^5\) from hence at once. \[be gone\]

——Arragon
I am enjoined\(^9\) by oath to observe three things: \[obliged > obligated, bound\]
First, never to disclose\(^2\) to anyone \[unfold / reveal\]
Which casket ‘twas I chose. Next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life \[woo\]
To join\(^6\) a maid by way of marriage. Lastly,
If I do fail\(^8\) in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone. \(^7\)

——Portia
To these injunctions\(^9\) everyone doth swear \[conditions\]
Who comes to hazard for my worthless\(^8\) self. \[lowly\]

——Arragon

---

1. / Quickly, draw back the curtain straight away / Quickly now, draw the curtain straight away
   \textit{straight}: right away / straight away

2. / (And comes to his election presently)

3. / (And should you choose the one containing me)

4. / (Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized) / Straight shall we go to church and there be married

5. / You must be gone from hence immediately

6. / To chose the right casket, ne’er in my life

7. / To leave at once\(^8\) and forever be gone. / forthwith

8. / These are the terms to which all men must swear

9. \textit{worthless}: insignificant, less than worthy (when compared to the worth of these great suitors).
   This is a false show of modesty.
And so am I obligèd.\textsuperscript{10} Fortune now
To my heart’s hope! Gold, silver, and base lead:
‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’
You shall possess more beauty\textsuperscript{11} than mere lead\textsuperscript{12} / value
Ere I should\textsuperscript{o} give or hazard all on you.
What says the golden chest? Ah,\textsuperscript{o} let me see:
‘Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.’
What ‘many men desire’ may indicate\textsuperscript{15} 16 / may but suggest / may refer to
The foolish multitudes\textsuperscript{16} that choose by show;
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach\textsuperscript{o} 17 / than what fond eye teaches
Which pries\textsuperscript{o} not inwardly\textsuperscript{18} but like the martlet
Does build its nest upon the outer wall
{The original reads: {You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard}. Hence, he makes his decision based upon looks and not consideration of the inscription. Then, ironically, the bulk of his speech is dedicated to condemning those who judge by outer appearance and the ‘fool multitude that choose by show.’}
And in the way I will not chose what many men desire
Because I will not jump\textsuperscript{21} with common spirits\textsuperscript{o} 22 / join / common sorts
And rank\textsuperscript{o} me with the barbarous multitudes.\textsuperscript{23} / class / judge
Now then, to thee, thou silver treasure-house,
Tell me once more what title\textsuperscript{o} thou dost bear:
‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
And well said too! For who shall go about\textsuperscript{o} / For what man shall attempt
To cozen\textsuperscript{o} fortune by a show of honor\textsuperscript{24} / To cheat one’s / Beguiling

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{addressed me}: I have addressed (and fulfilled) these injunctions by taking the required vows.
\item The original line \{You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard\} is here split into two lines, making it clear that Arragon is referring to the plainness of the casket and not Portia. Some productions have Arragon address this line toward Portia, thus punctuating his arrogance and suggesting that she would have to possess more beauty before he would hazard and risk all on her. But he is risking all on her. So, such a direction is misplaced.
\item Arragon dismisses the lead casket in one line saying, you must look more beautiful before I would risk everything on you. \{You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard\}. Hence, he makes his decision based upon looks and not consideration of the inscription. Then, ironically, the bulk of his speech is dedicated to condemning those who judge by outer appearance and the ‘fool multitude that choose by show.’
\item And yet that ‘many’ may well indicate
\item The original reads: \{What many men desire? That ‘many’ may be meant\} By the fool multitudes. The line is competent enough but contains an additional (and superfluous lamb); it is unlikely that the learned Arragon would stray from the standard meter where there was no reason to do so. The original most likely would have read: ‘\textit{What many men desire’ may be meant}—with Arragon referring back to the last portion of the inscription (‘what many men desire’) rather than one word (‘many’). In this version, the standard meter has been preserved.
\item Not seeing past the fondness of their eyes / Not seeing past what attracts their attention
\item fond eyes: that which is attractive to the eye and which appeals to the outer senses (and thereby lacking true inner vision and wisdom)
\item martlet: a bird, probably referring to the house-martin or swift
\item Exposing it to hazardous conditions
\item Even in the force and road of casualty / Which is the road unto harm and casualty / Putting itself in danger and in harm’s way / E’en at the risk of injury and death / Subject to hazard, danger, and destruction [See Additional Notes, 2.9.29]
\item Because I won’t commune / Because I shalln’t conspire
\item jump with: run the same course as, be in agreement with, be associated with, be allied with, etc.
\item And be so ranked with the barbarous masses / And have me ranked with the ignorant hordes
\item and to show one’s honor
\end{enumerate}
Without the seal° of merit? Let none presume [stamp] / badge // a dint
To wear an undeservèd dignity.° / worthiness
O that one’s status, wealth, and high position 25
Were not derived corruptly;° and that true° honor / by falsehood {clear} / bright
Were rightly earned by those who deem to wear it. 26 27
How many then should be without their crowns!° 28 29 / medals
How many that command would be commanded!
How much low peasantry,° 30 would then be gleaned°
From those of noble birth,° and how much honor
Amply bestowed° upon° our dignitaries / culled // could we extract
Would be but varnish? Well, but to my choice: 32
‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’ I will assume what I rightly deserve.
Give me a key t’unlock my fortunes here. 33 34 / I choose the silver chest. Give me a key

25. {O, that estates, degrees, and offices} / O that position, wealth, and higher office
   estates: a) one privilege, one’s position, b) one’s wealth, one’s fortune, what one owns
degrees: rank, position
26. {Were purchased° by the merit of the wearer} / procured
   / Were found upon the worth of those who wear it.
27. / Were not obtained through some corrupted° means; / deceitful
   And that true honor were justly bestowed
   In accord with the worth of those who wear it.
28. {How many then should cover that stand bare!}
   cover: succeed, be covered with the dress of success, wear (cover themselves with) a suit of dignity
   that: who now
   stand bare: a) those who have nothing, who stand naked (without wealth or honor), b) the bare head of servants, who do not wear a hat in the presence of their masters.
a) How many then (if rank and position were not derived corruptly) should cover their bare heads—as they do now—with hats or crowns, to signify their true honor?—none.
b) How many then should keep their hats on (cover their heads) when those of presumed rank passed by?—everyone. (No one would doff his hat as a sign of respect).
c) How many, then, would succeed that now have nothing? How many, then, who now stand bare (without recognition) would be covered with medals (signifying honor)?—a few. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.43]
29. The next six lines are somewhat vague and the metaphors used are inconsistent but their intent is clear: Arragon is saying that those who now have honor are not deserving of it (and that the honor they show was derived corruptly). Two of the lines, however, could be interpreted more amicably: one could mean that among those who are low (with bare heads) some are worthy and could wear the hats normally worn by dignitaries (signifying honor); the other, that among the ‘chaff and ruin’ some are truly honorable—and could be made to appear that way with the right exterior coating (varnish). For the most part, however, the lines reflect Arragon’s view that those who are currently in the place of honor are undeserving of it, thereby convincing himself that he alone is deserving of both honor and Portia. Not.
   In an attempt to rectify the metaphor (and preserve its agricultural references) Bailey (1862) emends the passage as follows: ‘How much low peasant’s rye would then be screen’d’ / From the true seed of honor! and how much seed / Pick’d from the chaff and strewings of the temse / To be new garner’d! (Temse refers to a kind of sieve). Bailey notes that the term peasantry is not found in any of Shakespeare’s other dramas. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.48]
30. {How much low peasantry would then be gleaned] Q reads, ‘how much low peasantry,’ whereas F reads, ‘how much low pleasantry.’
   low pleasantry: lowliness, low rank or conduct of a peasant
   low peasantry: low remarks of humor; low courteous remarks; lip service, facetiousness
31. {From the true seed of honor} / From so-called ‘noblemen’
32. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.48]
33. {I will assume desert. Give me a key for this} / And instantly unlock my fortunes here / I choose the sliver casket—now the key / I will assume desert—give me the key
   / To claim my prize for all the world to see / To claim my prize and my fortune to be
34. Morocco’s final line {O hell! What have we here} [2.7.62] rhymes with Portia’s previous line, ending with “there.” Likewise, Aragon’s final line, ending with “here,” rhymes with Portia’s next line ending with “there.” Bassanio’s soliloquy ends with the standard rhyme scheme. These rhyme schemes could be “corrected” but this break in the rhyme scheme indicates that both Morocco and Aragon have been cut short.
   Unlike Morocco’s soliloquy, Arragon makes no mention of Portia, only himself. Morocco mentions both himself and the lady. Bassanio mentions neither himself nor the lady.
He opens the silver casket and pauses

—Portia
Too long a pause for that which you find there. / you do see / would agree

—Arragon
What’s here? The portrait of a blinking idiot. / dull-eyed
Presenting me a schedule. / I will read it. / with a scroll
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
‘Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.’
Did I deserve no more than a fool’s head!
Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better? / Is what I deserve

—Portia
By your own hand, O Prince, your choice was made; / you made your choice
Can I be judge of that? / Need // I need not be the judge

—Arragon And what is here?

Five times fire did burn this; {try} > purify

37. Arragon misquotes the inscription which suggests that he is recalling it not actually reading it.
38. / By your own hand, you have rendered a verdict / By you own choice, O prince, you gave a verdict
39. {To offend and judge are distinct offices | And of opposèd natures.}
   One who offends (who shows such arrogance) cannot now be in a position to judge or give sentence (since this requires impartiality and wisdom). Later in the scene [80] Portia praises Aragon for having the wisdom to lose. If Portia is being asked by Arragon to be the judge (and overrule the verdict), she is politely excusing herself. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.60]
40. / Need I be judge of that? // Tis not my place to judge || And what is here?
   / I need not be the judge of that. || What’s here?
41. [The fire seven times tried this] tried: refined, purified [See Morocco’s use of the term, 2.7.53]
42. Q1 reads as follows:

The fire seven times tried this | Seven times that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss, | Some there be that shadow’s kiss,
Such have but a shadow’s bliss: | There be fools alive Iwis (I wis)
Silvered o’er, and so was this. | Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head: | So be gone, you are sped.
Five times judgement brings a hiss, / brings abyss / falls amiss,
Now your choice begets a miss; / Now your choice is e’er amiss
Some there be that shadow’s kiss,
Such have but a shadow’s bliss.
There be fools we all dismiss,
Silvered o’er, and so was this.
Take what thought you will to bed
I will ever be your head
So be gone for you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear,
By the time I linger here, / With
With one fool’s head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet adieu, I’ve lost my claim,
Thus I go to bear my shame.

—Portia

One more moth into the flame. / Another / Flies the
O, these high-minded fools when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wits to lose.

Exit Arragon and his attendants

43. {That did never choose amiss} / Choose you now another miss / That did never choose wis
44. {There be fools alive Iwis} / Iwis: certainly, assuredly, for sure; ‘I know,’ ‘I think.’ The capitalization suggests that the original intent was probably I wis, or I know.
45. {Silvered o’er, and so was this} / Silvered o’er: a) Dressed up with the appearance of merit, perhaps donning some silver medals. This reference specifically implicates Arragon for the very thing he so diligently condemned in others—undeserved worth. b) The silver or gray hair found on aged persons who are considered wise (due to age) but who are, indeed, fools.
46. {Take what wife you will to bed} / my suit is lame
47. {I will ever be your head} / e’er be in your head
48. {That did never choose amiss} / C choose you now another miss / That did never choose iwis
49. {There be fools alive Iwis}
50. {Sweet adieu—I’ll keep my vow, | Patiently to bear my wroath.} / To your good choice, O prince, I bow / And to my fortune I do bow. / A moth into the flames—and how! / Another / Flies the
51. {deliberate} / deliberate: deliberating, calculating, over-thinking. This term suggests a reliance on the mind as opposed to the heart. Portia, however, is thankful for this deliberation since it leads such suitors into making the wrong choice.
The ancient saying is still true of late:
Hanging and wiving are compelled by fate.  

—Portia
Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Messenger

[——Messenger
Where is my lady?

—Portia
Here. What would my lord? ]

—Messenger
Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one who has arrived
To indicate the approach of his lord,
From whom he bringeth bounteous off rings,
That is to say (besides his courteous words)

52. {The ancient saying is no heresy: | Hanging and wiving go by destiny}
   / The ancient saying is a verity | is a truth I see
   / The ancient saying is not one of hearsay: | Hanging and wiving go by fate I dear say
   / The ancient saying holds true even now: | Hanging and wiving are fated somehow

53. my lord: Portia is using this term playfully as it would never be used in reference to a messenger. She is playing on the use of the term my lady, suggesting by her playful, my lord, that she does not hold the rank of a lady. This line {Where is my lady? || Here my lord}, however, is suspect, both in the messenger’s superfluous question, and Portia askew response. Thus, this line could be deleted without any loss.

54. {th’approaching} / th’arrival / the coming
55. {From whom he bringeth sensible regrets} / From whom he bringeth bounding compliments / From whom he brings abounding (abundant) salutations.

sensible: evident to the senses, abundant
regrets: a) salutations, greetings, compliments, b) gifts
Sensible regrets would usually be interpreted as ‘abundant greetings,’ yet with the modifier (‘Gifts of great value’) the expression would suggest, ‘a lot of gifts’—and gifts of great value.
56. {To wit, besides commends and courteous breath}

52. {The ancient saying is no heresy: | Hanging and wiving go by destiny}
   / to date / and straight
   / obliged by / outcomes of / fortunes of

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56. {To wit, besides commend and courteous breath}
Gifts of rich value. ‘Til now, I’ve not seen\(^{57}\) > As of yet / Up to this time
So hopeful\(^{58}\) an ambassador of love. \(^{58}\) [likely] > promising
A day in spring has never come\(^{59}\) so sweet
To show the bounty of summer’s approach \(^{59}\) [in April never came]
As this forerunner\(^{59}\) comes before his lord.

—Portia
No more, I pray thee. I am half afeared\(^{60}\) / afraid
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee\(^{61}\) / he is your cousin
Thou spend’st such lavish wit\(^{61}\) in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa, this\(^{62}\) I long to see,
One from Cupid’s post come so gracefully.\(^{62}\) [mannerly]

—Nerissa [aside]
Bassanio! Lord Love—if thy will it be!\(^{62,63}\) / Lord of Love, O let it be!

Exeunt

---

57. {Yet, I have not seen} / I have not yet seen / As of yet, I’ve not seen
yet: as of yet, heretofore

58. / So promising a harbinger\(^{58}\) of love / courier / messenger
59. / To show how costly summer was at hand / To show how fully summer was at hand
costly: lavish, full, bountiful

60. fore-spurrer: a forerunner who comes on a horse.
61. {Thou spend’st such high-day wit in praising him} / Thou spend’st thy Sunday best in praising him.
   high-day: holiday, fit for a high holy day or a Sunday; high-blown, lavish, extravagant
   high-day wit: language befitting a special day,

62. The line found in Q1 reads: ’Bassanio Lord, love if thy will it be.’ Most editors reject this punctuation and follow the sensible emendation of Rowe, which reads: ’Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!’ The punctuation in Q1 refers the term ‘Lord’ to Bassanio (Lord Bassanio), rather than it being a reference to Cupid (Lord love), who is mentioned in the previous line. Another possibility is that Nerissa is making a plea to God, the Lord, in hopes of Bassanio’s arrival: ’Bassanio, Lord—love if they will it be.’
   / Bassanio! [please] Lord—[let there be] love if they will it be! / if it’s meant to be!
   / [Please let it be] Bassanio, Lord, [and let there be] love, if they will it be!
   / O Lord, Bassanio—if thy will it be!
   / Bassanio, Lord of Love, I pray it be [See Additional Notes, 2.9.100]
63. The question begged by this line is: How might Nerissa come to know, or even surmise, that Bassanio was a suitor, and likely to arrive in Belmont? Her delighted mention of Bassanio, and her plea to Cupid for it to be Bassanio, tells us that she was eagerly expecting his arrival. (Bassanio’s arrival also portends the arrival of Gratziano, which may be what Nerissa was really hoping for). [See Essays: The Lottery]
ACT THREE — Scene One

Venice. Enter Salanio and Salarino

—Salanio

Now, what news on the Rialto?

—Salarino

Why yet it lives there unchecked,¹ that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading² wrecked³ on the narrow seas—the Goodwin Shoals⁴ I think they call the place—a very dangerous flat,⁵ and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall⁶ ship lie buried. This be the news⁷ if my gossip report be a woman of her word.⁸

—Salanio

I wish she were as lying a gossip as an old maid who ever knapped⁹ ginger,⁹ (moving her jaw up and down without a word coming out) or like a one who weeps and has her neighbors believing that her husband has just died—for the third time! But it is true, without any miss-matching of words,⁶ or crossing the plain highway of talk,⁷ that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio—O that I had a title good⁸ enough to keep his name company—⁸

—Salarino

Come the full stop anon⁹—what sayest thou?⁹ / by now > already

—Salanio

Why the end is, he hath lost a ship.¹⁰

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¹. {it lives there unchecked} / Why news is spreading fast
   lives: / breeds **unchecked**: unstopped, uncontradicted
². {that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading} / that Antonio’s ship, laden with riches
   rich lading: rich cargo
³. wrecked: [wreckt]: wrackt / strewn about the Goodwin Shoals: [the Goodwins]: the Goodwin Sands, a shoal off the coast of Kent, England flat: sand bar, sand flat, shoal tall: / proud / great / grand
⁴. be the news: [as they say]
⁵. {if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word} / If the rumors are true
   This double-positive (honest + woman of her word) could be simplified or emended as follows: ‘if my gossip report be an honest woman / if my gossip report be a woman of word.
⁶. {without any slips of prolixity}
   prolixity: wordy, verbose, long-winded— tiresome as a result of being too wordy
   slips: lapses into, indulgence in
   slips of prolixity: without embellishment, without using too many words (or euphemisms to try and cover up the hoped for truth), etc.
⁷. crossing the plain highway of talk: deviating from a straight-forward account; ‘beating around the bush.’
⁸. knapped: chewed on ginger: / ginger snaps title good enough: / merit enough
⁹. / Come to the end already! What is it? / Come, the full stop. And now, what sayest thou? / Come, the full stop by now—what sayest thou?
¹⁰. The line division in Q1 is amiss. It reads:
   Salari. Come, the full stop.
   Salarino. Ha, what sayest thou, why the end is, he hath lost a ship.
   In this line division, Salanio asks Salarino a question when Salarino is the one seeking information. Hence, Salanio’s question, ‘Ha, what say’st thou?’ should be assigned to Salarino. In addition, it is clear what Salarino is saying and so for Salanio to question him is not warranted. In defense of the original line structure, Salanio could be asking the question to himself, and then answering it but such a construction is forced.
—Salarino
I hope it might prove the end of his losses.  

—Salanio
Let me say, ‘amen’ to that,  

[lest the devil cross my prayer—for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.]

Enter Shylock

How now, Shylock—what news among the merchants?

—Shylock
You knew—none so well, none so well as you—of my daughter’s flight.

—Salarino
That’s certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings on which she flew away.

—Salanio
And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was ready to fly—as it is the nature of all (young girls) to leave the nest.

—Shylock
She is damned for it!

—Salarino

11. See note 27 for a possible way to rectify this scene. If rectified, Salarino and Salanio would exeunt here, lines 19-50 would be deleted, and Shylock would enter alone and deliver his famous speech, ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’ to the audience—and not to the disinterested Salarino and Salanio. Shylock, moreover, would be trying to convince himself that his need for revenge against Antonio was justified.

12. {Let me say ‘amen’ betimes} / Let me say ‘amen’ while there is still time / before it’s too late

betimes: while there is still time; right now / quickly

13. It seems that Jessica’s flight took place a few weeks ago; this is consistent with Tubal’s return from Genoa, which takes place later in the scene. (Genoa, by road, is some 200+ miles from Venice.) Shylock has seen Antonio many times, and it is likely he would have also seen Salarino and Salanio. Yet, for dramatic consistency, we must assume that this is the first time that Shylock sees Salanio and Salarino since Jessica’s flight.

14. A fanciful reference to a tailor who made Jessica’s wings; this could also be a reference to the tailor who made the boy’s clothing that Jessica wore.

15. {she flew withal}

16. {fledge} a fledgling, ready to fly.

17. {leave the dam}: leave the nest. The substitution of nest for dam, which makes the line more understandable, ruins the word association with the next line where Shylock says, ‘she is damned for it.’

18. In an earlier embodiment of the play, where Salarino alone existed (and had not yet been split into two identical characters: Salarino and Salanio) all the lines in this scene belonged to Salarino. When Salanio was added, this line (which has congruity as a single line) was split into two, with the first part remaining with Salarino and the second part assigned to Salanio. Salanio’s superfluous closing line, [73], however, was not part of the original embodiment (nor originally assigned to Salarino) but was likely added ex post facto after the final draft was complete. [See Note 41]

19. Here the blame quickly shifts from Salarino and Salanio to Jessica (where it belongs) and then the blame changes into rage against Christians in general and Antonio in particular. Shylock’s words hereafter, to the two Sallies—although he is being mocked—is friendly and cordial. He does not attack them in the way they attack him.
That’s certain, if the devil may be her judge.

—Shylock
My own flesh and blood to rebel!

—Salanio
This bag of flesh is sure to rebel for a man of your years.  

—Shylock
I say my daughter is my flesh and my blood.

—Salanio
There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet black and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and white Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio has had any loss at sea or no?

—Shylock
There I have another bad match.  A bankrupt, a prodigal who dare scarce show his head on

20. {Out upon it, old carrion, rebels it at these years.}

{out upon it:} Probably refers to something like, ‘damn it,’ ‘to hell with it,’ ‘throw it out,’ etc. thus suggesting something that is ruined or ready to be discarded. This negative sense is supported by the reference to the body as ‘old carrion.’ A similar term (‘out upon her’) is used by Shylock later in the scene [113] when referring to his daughter.

{old carrion:} the body which is corporeal, weak, and subject to aging

{rebels it at these years:} the body, specifically the male sexual organ, rebels (does not follow one’s wishes) when it gets to be this age. / Damn this old carrion. It rebels and will not rise to the occasion

21. A line, expounding upon the sexual nature of Salanio’s previous comment, could be added here:

—Salarino: You can’t expect it to rise on every occasion.

22. Salarino talks here in a very familiar tone and he seems to know both Jessica and Shylock well enough to make such a comparison. Yet his words are rather acerbic. Shylock, however, does not respond to these cutting words (nor does he seem to take offence) as his mind is occupied with other concerns. Shylock opens the scene with an accusatory tone (against the Sals) but the bulk of his mentality quickly shifts to his daughter and Antonio (with help from the Sals).

23. The contrast between red wine and Rhenish (which is a white German wine) is primarily that between something crude (red wine) and something refined (Rhenish) though there is also the more obvious contrast between the colors of red and white. Without an understanding of Rhenish this contrast would be lost, especially since Rhenish sounds a lot like red. To make this distinction clear, the above line could read: ‘between red wine and white,’ or ‘between crude red wine and fine white Rhenish.’

24. {There I have another bad match} / There I have another thing gone wrong.

This reference is unclear and we are not certain of how Antonio’s loss at sea represents another bad match. The first bad match—which Shylock is unwittingly concurring with—is that between Shylock and his daughter, the second bad match is that between Shylock and Antonio. The bad match refers to Antonio’s inability to pay—but we are not clear as to why Shylock is calling it bad. (If Shylock was truly delighted in Antonio’s loss, he might call it a good match rather than a bad one).

25. {a bankrupt:} someone whose funds (bank account) has been routed; someone who is bankrupt

26. {a prodigal:} a wasted man.

The term generally refers to one who has carelessly spent or wasted his wealth (by being too liberal in his spending). Antonio, however, is more careful in his ventures yet, earlier in the scene, Shylock describes Antonio’s ventures as, ‘ventures he hath squandered abroad’ [1.3.20-21] and so the term might refer to Antonio’s overly extended ventures.
the Rialto; a beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart. Let him look to his bond. He was wont to call me ‘usurer’—let him look to his bond. He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy—let him look to his bond.

—Salarino

Why, I am sure, if he forfeit thou wilt not take his flesh. What’s that good for?

—Shylock

27. upon the mart: at the Rialto; where the merchants and traders meet

28. According to theory, Salarino and Salanio were not found in the original draft of the play (nor the second draft—for in that draft Salarino alone existed) but the pair came about as part of a third draft—and the pair’s main function is to talk about, and give news of, the main characters. Thus, it is likely that Shylock’s famous speech was originally a monologue, with Shylock making his plea to the audience rather than two supporters of Antonio (who would not sympathize with, nor understand, Shylock’s position).
To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million times. He hath laughed at my losses, mocked my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my ventures, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies—and what’s his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, arms, legs, senses, affections, desires? (Are we not fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrongs a Christian, what kindness does he return? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be, by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will return unto you; yet it shall go harder to you than it has come to me.

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29. / To use for baiting fish. / To use as bait for fish
30. / dishonored / humiliated
31. {hindered me half a million}: a) hindered me again and again, a half a million times, b) caused me a loss of half a million ducats in profit
   / hindered me a million times
32. {dimensions} / a body frame / bones > which make up a person’s height
33. {affections, passions} 
   Affections generally refers to objective desires, things a person likes, things influenced by the senses; passions refer more to subjective feelings, stirred from the heart.
34. {what is his humility?} 
   / what kindness does he show? > said with sarcasm
   / what does he give (/offer / show) in return?
   **his humility**: his humble response; the kindness and benevolence shown by a Christian
35. **villainy**: ill-treatment / vulgarity / obscenity.
   The term Jew was often synonymous with villain, and we see this reference in a line by Launcelet: *for I am a Jew [villain] if I serve the Jew any longer.* [2.2.108] The villainy that Christians teach Jews, is that they view and treat Jews as villains; hence, that same villainy (and wretched treatment) that Christians impose on Jews, Shylock, a Jew, will now impose on a Christian.
36. {execute} / repay unto you/ give in fair return / repay in fullness / give back to
37. {and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction} 
   / and it shall go hard, for I will give it to you better than you have given it to me
   / and I will give it hard to you but I will give the better lesson
38. There is a continued reference to Christians even though the object of Shylock’s revenge is Antonio. Antonio is the one who has mistreated Shylock, and he (Antonio) has become a symbol for Shylock which represents the Christian mistreatment of Jews. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.69]
—Salanio
Your words are filled with passion, old man, yet fail to impress. If Christian and Jew be alike in their need for revenge why not in their readiness to forgive? I say, there is neither Jew nor Christian in your words; there is naught but hatred—a misplaced and misbegotten hatred.

—Salarino
Antonio is the best of men.

—Salanio
This revenge you ply with such zeal is not a thing you’ve learned by Christian example—‘tis your own creation. It has nothing to do with good Antonio who hates usury not the Jew or his nation.42

42. Optional line: “Bear in mind, we speak of good Antonio not about the lesser company he keeps.” Adding this line would indicate that Antonio is especially good (and never makes a negative comment about Jews) while other Christians, such as Salanio and Salarino, are not so good, and may have made negative comments about Jews.
Enter a Man from Antonio

—Man
Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

—Salarino
We have been up and down to seek him out. ⁴³ ⁴⁴

Exeunt Salarino, Salanio, and Man

Enter Tubal

—Shylock
How now, Tubal. What news from Genoa? ⁴⁵ Hast thou found my daughter?

—Tubal
I often came where I did hear of her, but could not find her. {cannot} / but there I could not

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⁴³ Q1 reads: {Solanio. Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be matched unless the devil himself turn Jew.} As mentioned in previous notes, anti-Semitic ‘additions’ to the text are often found at the end of a scene or a speech (made as a last remark before a character exits); these add-ons often appear misplaced ‘forced’ upon the text, and smack of having been penned in ex post facto by someone other than the author. Also note that in this short interaction, a Jew is likened to a devil three times [19, 31, 73]: thus is seems that someone, lacking in all manner of the art here, yet again.) And here, again, we find a likely case of ‘unauthorized appendaging.’ Not only is the content suspect, but the textual anomalies surrounding this entry support the theory that it is a corrupt addition to the text: for instance, there a mistaken speech heading in the preceding line (attributing the line to Saleri not Salar): the stage direction, Enter Tuball, is listed twice; and the stage direction reads Exeunt Gentlemen, as opposed to Exeunt.

Saleri. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tuball.

Solanio. Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be match, unless the devil himself turn Jew. Exeunt Gentlemen.

Enter Tuball.

[See Additional Notes, 3.1.73]

⁴⁴ See previous note: The original entry is likely a corrupted addition to the text and has been deleted. However, a portion of the original line attributed to Salanio could be emended (and added to the text):

Salanio: Here comes another of the tribe. Let’s quick unto Antonio’s house.

⁴⁵ Genoa is 200+ miles from Venice.
—Shylock

Why there, there, there, there! 47 A diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort. The curse never fell upon our nation till now—I never felt it till now. 48 Two thousand ducats in that and other precious, precious jewels. I wish my daughter were dead at my feet and the jewels in her ear! That she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin! 49 50 No news of them? Why so? And I know not what is spent in the search. Why, thou—loss upon loss. The thief is gone with so much and so much (spent) to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge; 51 nor no ill-luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders, no sighs but of my breathing, no tears but of my shedding. 52 53

47. Stage direction: [Shylock motions his hands in different directions, as if casually throwing things away, indicating a carefree waste of his jewels and ducats]

48. No curse has fallen upon ‘our nation,’—the only curse that has fallen is upon Shylock. What pain is Shylock feeling for the first time? All the years of being persecuted as a Jew, by his enemies, he could not feel but the betrayal of his daughter has reached his core; it is like a stabbing that comes from inside his heart. Perhaps it was the combination—the betrayal of his daughter and the reckless ruin of his hard-earned money—that caused Shylock, for the first time, to feel the curse that fell upon his nation. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.81]

49. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the ducats in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin! Is Shylock wishing his daughter dead because she has betrayed him or because of the monetary loss she incurred? Here we see Shylock’s confusion over value—between his daughter and his ducats. In the court scene Shylock refuses an offer of 9000 ducats (which was well above the sum stolen by his daughter) so the loss of money is not the whole of his suffering. Here Shylock is wishing his daughter dead so that he could retrieve his jewels and ducats from her dead body—which reveals his confusion and misplaced sense of rage. He simply has no way to understand or express what he is feeling. He is not really wishing his daughter dead, even though he makes this plea twice. Yet even with this wish there is a mixed message: he wishes that his daughter be dead, but also that she be at his feet, that she returns to him.

50. Some additional lines could be added to mollify Shylock’s previous words. (Notice that Shylock speaks frankly about wanting his daughter dead but we never hear him talk with the same directness or sense of entitlement when it comes to Antonio). The added lines would also better situate the question, ‘No news of them?’ addressing it to Tubal as opposed to Shylock asking the question to himself:

—Shylock . . . ducats in her coffin. (She’s made me suffer; she has cut me deeper than all mine enemies. They, I know, are set against me, and their cruelty I can bear, but she was dearer to me than all the world.)

(—Tubal Those who are closest, oft’ cut us the deepest.)

Shylock No news of them?

(—Tubal None.)

51. Herein Shylock is using the term thief—and expressing his desire for revenge—in reference to his own daughter. So, we see that Shylock’s response in terms of revenge—even with respect to his own daughter—is a flaw of his own character and not something he learned from Christian example (as he stated in his famous ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’ speech). He wants Jessica dead—as that is the action he deems to match her crime. However, Shylock’s words belie his true feelings—he does not actually want Jessica dead but that is the most violent thing he can say as to express his sadness and misplaced rage. Perhaps the kind of revenge that Shylock actually seeks is to teach her a lesson, to somehow make Jessica feel the same kind of pain that he feels so that she might come to know (and regret) the pain she has brought on him.

52. {nor no ill luck stirring but what lights a my shoulders, no sighs but a my breathing, no tears but a my shedding.}

—Tubal
Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

—Shylock
What? What? Tell me—what kind of ill luck? 54

—Tubal
He hath an argosy, cast away, coming from Tripolis.

—Shylock
I have heard the same. Is it true, is it true? 55

—I thank God, I thank God.

—Tubal
I spoke with some of the sailors who escaped the wreck.

—Shylock
I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news. What else did you hear in Genoa? 56

—Tubal
Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night, eighty ducats.57

—Shylock
Thou stick’st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. Eighty ducats in one sitting! Eighty ducats!

54. {What, what, what, ill luck, ill luck.} / What? What? Ill luck for Antonio?
   This odd repetition of words, which is also found in line 96 [I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?] and line 99
   [I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news. Ha, ha!] may have resulted from a portion of the original line being
   unreadable and the typesetter, in an attempt to fix it, simply repeated some of the words that were readable. The original
   manuscript may have appeared as such:
   □□□□□□□what □□□□□□□ill luck.
   a) typesetter’s rectification: ‘What, what, what, ill luck, ill luck.’
   b) another possible rectification: ‘Tell me, what kind of ill luck?’ / What, what kind of ill luck?

56. Both the quartos and the folios have ‘hear in Genoa’ {heere in Genowa} which most editors emend as ‘heard in
   Genoa’ They defend this emendation by stating that d and e were easily confused in Elizabethan handwriting; though they
   have no answer as to how ea, in heard, would have been mis-typeset as ee, in heere.
57. {four score ducats} / eighty / one hundred / two hundred / four hundred
   The original reads, ‘four score ducats’; it is here replaced with a more familiar and recognizable amount of ‘eighty
   ducats.’ The term four score is not a number readily recognized by the modern audience (and they would have to pause to
   mentally translate this term into ‘eighty.’) In addition, the term is indelibly associated with the opening of the Gettysburg
   Address and would prompt most audience members to make that irrelevant association.
   Eighty ducats does not represent an amount whereby Shylock would feel as if someone had ‘stick’st a dagger’ in him.
   Perhaps the intent of Shylock lamenting over ‘four score’ ducats—and repeating the term twice in the following line—was
   meant to show his miserliness (for in the context of a 2000 ducat ring, and the 3000 ducat bond, such an amount is too
   small to take up so much attention). One possible emendation would be to ‘up the ante’ and replace ‘four score ducats’
   with ‘four hundred ducats’ which is an amount more likely to elicit such a strong reaction but still insignificant.
—Tubal
And, in my company\textsuperscript{58} to Venice, there came several\textsuperscript{59} of Antonio’s creditors who swear he cannot chose but break.

break: go bankrupt / go bust

—Shylock
I am very glad of it. I’ll plague him, I’ll torture him. I am glad of it.\textsuperscript{60}

—Tubal
One of them showed me a ring that he had from your daughter—in exchange for a monkey.

—Shylock
Damn her for it.\textsuperscript{61} Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise. I had it of Leah \textsuperscript{62} when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a jungle full\textsuperscript{63} of monkeys.

\textsuperscript{58} in my company: traveling with me / along with me
\textsuperscript{59} several of: {divers of} (> from ‘diverse’) / a number of / many of
\textsuperscript{60} At this point Shylock could direct the conversation back to talk of his daughter as opposed to having Tubal always directing the subject of conversation toward Antonio. Hence, Shylock could finish this line by adding, ‘And what of my daughter?’ or ‘And is there any more news of my daughter?’
\textsuperscript{61} Damn her for it: {Out upon her}: Out of this world with her, to hell with her.
\textsuperscript{62} I had it of Leah: I received it from Leah.
\textsuperscript{63} whole jungle: {wilderness} / whole jungle

Shylock’s wife, Leah, is here mentioned by name. Recall the story from Genesis that Shylock told to Antonio, relating to Jacob attending to Laban’s sheep. [1.3.74-87]: Jacob’s somewhat deceitful actions could have been his way to get even with Laban, his father-in-law, who had previously tricked Jacob into taking Leah (Laban’s daughter) as his wife and not Rachel (whom Jacob desired).

Shylock’s initial response to Tubal begins with an attack on Jessica {out upon her}; then addresses Shylock’s feelings {thou torturest me}; and then it’s about the ring. The order of the lines could be transposed where Shylock’s initial response is about the ring, then Jessica, then himself: Shylock: That was my turquoise ring. I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a whole jungle of monkeys. Damn her for it. Thou torture me Tubal.
—Tubal
But Antonio is certainly undone. 64

—Shylock
Nay, that’s true, that’s very true. Go Tubal, get me an officer, and give him a two-week notice. I will have the heart of him if he forfeit—for were he out of Venice I can do what business I will. Go, Tubal, and meet me at the Rialto. Go, good Tubal; at the Rialto Tubal. 67 68 69

get me: {fee me} / find me / hire me

Exeunt. They go separate ways

64. Tubal, again, is trying to divert Shylock from his grief (over the loss of his daughter) to something Shylock will be glad of—Antonio’s losses.
65. {Bespeak him a fortnight before}. Tell the officer to arrest Antonio in a fortnight (when the bond is due) if Antonio does not pay the full amount.

This securing of an officer in two weeks (when the bond is due) defies the time frame of the play: Bassanio is now in Belmont with plenty of time to win Portia, return to Venice, and pay off the debt—as planned—before it is due. Though Antonio bids Bassanio not to rush things in his courtship of Bassanio, surely Bassanio would have been well aware of the exact date that Shylock’s bond was due (because he was there when the bond was secured and was well aware of the gruesome terms), and would have made sure to pay it off in time—or maybe not. (Bassanio set sail for Belmont at the end of 2.6). [See: Essays, Time Warp]
66. [See Additional Notes: 3.1.121]
67. {Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.} The likely intention here is to show the Elizabethan audience that Jews use their synagogue as a place to do business—which is the very thing that Jesus revolted against. Here “synagogue” is changed to the Rialto since that is the place where Shylock does business. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.123]
68. This line marks the end of a series of odd lines, spoken by Shylock, where he needlessly repeats his words. Such lines include:

I thank God, I thank God. Is it true? Is it true? [96]
I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha, here in Genoa. [99]
Four score ducats at a sitting! Four score ducats! [104]
I am glad of it. I’ll plague him, I’ll torture him. I am glad of it. [109]

Go Tubal and meet me at out synagogue. Go, good Tubal, at our synagogue, Tubal. [121]
69. For more on Shylock’s emotional state (how his sadness has been displaced by rage) see Additional Notes, 3.1.124
Belmont.
Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and attendants.  

—Portia [to Bassanio]

I pray you, tarry.² Pause a day or two
Before you hazard,² for in choosing wrong
I lose your company. Thus, forbear² awhile.
There’s² something tells me, but it is not love,
I could² not bear to lose you. And you know
Indifference² counsels not in such a way.²
But lest you should not understand me well²—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought—
I would detain² you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I break my oath,²
And that will² never be—so² you may miss me.
But if you do,² you’ll make me wish a sin,
That I did break my oath.² So blame your eyes,³
They have bewitched² me and divided me:⁵

> spend some more time
/ hold back / remain
/ Now // cannot
{would}
/ Disfavor {Hate} / // {quality}
/ fully
/I want to keep
{I am forsworn}⁶
{That will I} / thus
> miss me / choose wrong
{That I had been foresworn}
{They have o’erlooked me and divided me}

---

1. This scene opens in media res. The theory put forth in 1.1 is that Bassanio would receive some kind of help from Nerissa (in choosing the right casket) if he won Portia’s heart, i.e., if she chose him. Here we see that Portia has already choosen Bassanio, that she clearly wants him to choose the right casket. Thus, Bassanio would have had to have been in Belmont for a little while, time enough to win Portia’s heart. By all indications it appears that Bassanio was only in Belmont for a few hours before making his choice, though it is possible he could have been there a day or two.

2. Before you hazard: Before you make your choice, before you hazard a guess; before you put yourself in harm’s way by making a choice.

3. This may indicate that Portia can only think about what she wants (i.e., being with Bassanio) but cannot say anything that would bring this about, that would direct him to choosing the right casket.

4. I am forsworn: I have sworn falsely, I have failed to keep my oath. Forsworn is repeated later in the passage but at no other place in the text. It is interesting to note that a few lines later [53-62] Portia references a story about Hercules from Ovid’s Metamorphoses wherein, in the English translation (by Golding) the same word forsworne appears—and this is the only place in the 15 books of the Metamorphoses that the word is used. The likely implication is that the author referenced a copy of Golding’s Metamorphoses while composing this portion of the text (as opposed to simply recalling the story from a past reading).

5. {Beshrew your eyes}

6. {They have o’erlooked me and divided me}

O’erlooked: a) bewitched, as in being amazed and charmed, b) bewitched, as in altering one’s vision, as in confusion or with eyes looking but not seeing, c) overlooked me, not seen me as I am

Divided me: This may refer to the effect that Bassanio’s eyes have on Portia (dividing her sentiments, with one part loyal to her obligation, and keeping her vow to her father, with the other part loyal to her heart, wanting to break her vow and help Bassanio). Or it could refer to what Bassanio does not see with his eyes—he sees one Portia but overlooks the deep division and confusion within her.
One half of me is yours, the other half yours—
Mine own I would say—but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these wicked times
Put bars between the owners and their rights.  
And so, though yours, still not yours. Make your choice
And prove (to me that I am truly yours.
And should it be your fate to choose the wrong)  
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 'tis to slow the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from your choice.

—Bassanio
Nay, let me choose,
For as I am, I live upon the rack
〈Stretchèd and tortured with each passing moment.〉

—Portia
Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess

10. / Bars us from claiming what we rightly own. / Puts walls between an owner and his rights
12. / To offer thee no help. If you choose wrong / To give no help. And so, should you choose wrong
13. And so, though yours, still not yours. Make your choice / And prove (that I am yours. To this, I've sworn
15. / My hopes and dreams will go to hell, not I. / Piece the time: / To try and eke it and draw out its length / To draw and eke out every last moment
16. / To hold you / To hold you {election}

peize: to weigh down, load, burden; hang weights upon
piece the time: draw out, elongate, add pieces to the time (as in seconds, minutes, hours, etc.)
Q1 has peize which means, 'to weigh down, and may refer to the slowing of the clock, which is accomplished by hanging heavier weights upon the pendulum. It could also refer to the weighing (making more meaningful) the time. ('Weigh with deliberation each precious moment.' — Clarendon). Many editors dismiss this image and take peize to be a misspelling of piece, meaning to piece, augment, or add to. Piece the time would mean to add pieces to it, so as to make the time longer. In both cases the meaning is the same: it relates to slowing, prolonging, or adding to the time. Portia, not confident that Bassanio will choose the right casket by his own wit—which would force him to leave at once—wants to hedge her bets and enjoy his company for a little while longer.

The image of hanging weight upon the clock to slow down the time, could be depicted more literally:

I speak too long; but 'tis to hang more weight | Upon the clock, in hopes of slowing time

ech (eke): to prolong, extend, protract, augment, increase. Often used with out, as in 'eke out the time.'

17. / For as I am, I live upon the rack / For I now live as stretched upon the rack
upon the rack: refers to the image of a person being painfully stretched upon the rack (a common instrument of torture in Medieval times). This method of torture was commonly used to extract confessions from accused criminals and traitors (who were accused of treason). The term rack, means 'to painfully stretch.' Of course, to someone who is on the rack, and being tortured, every moment seems like an eternity. Bassanio, like someone on the rack, is being tortured with every moment that passes and, therefore, does not want to wait and eke out the time, as suggested by Portia.

Antonio uses this term in 1.1:181-82: Try what my credit can in Venice do; | That shall be racked, even to the utmost.
What treason there⁰ is mingled with your love?¹⁹

—Bassanio

None but the ugly treason of mistrust ²⁰
Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love.
There is more kinship and affinity⁰
‘Tween snow and fire, as⁰ treason and my love.²⁵ ²⁶

—Portia

〈And so⁰ you say your love is pure and taintless〉
Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack
Where men enforcèd do speak⁰ anything. ²⁷

—Bassanio

Promise me life and I’ll confess the truth.²⁸

—Portia

Well then, ‘confess and live.’ ²⁹

---

19. Portia is using this light banter, and this accusation of treason, to test Bassanio and to have him ‘confess’ what is true. Her real question is: Is your love true—is what you show (outwardly) a true reflection of what you feel? Are your motivations based on love for me or personal gain? Confess. Tell me the truth.

20. {None but that ugly treason of mistrust | Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love}
   Bassanio should be so sure about his love for Portia, about the fate that will bring them together—and that it's God’s plan that they be together—that it is treasonous for him to doubt and mistrust that.
   Bassanio’s treason could be in his mistrust of the wisdom of the lottery devised by Portia’s father, and Portia’s loyalty to her father’s wishes. Bassanio truly loves Portia, and wants to enjoy the fullness of that love (the same way that Portia wants to enjoy it)—and he mistrusts whether the lottery (which is supposed to determine one who truly loves Portia) will, in fact, be true to his and her love. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.29]

25. Bas: ‘Tween snow and fire as there is between treason | And my love.
   Portia: Yet, you speak upon the rack

26. {There may as well be amity and life | ‘Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love}
   There is as much kinship and similarity between snow and fire (which are opposites) as there is between treason and my love. In other words, there is no treason mixed with my love—it is pure and taintless. The treason is in my doubt as to whether or not I will enjoy that love but not in my love.

27. / Where men compelled do confess anything
   Again Portia is teasingly testing Bassanio, saying that his admission of love may not be sincere since, as he himself admitted, he is like someone upon the rack and, thus, will make a confession (utter a falshood) just so he can get off the rack. Such a rack-made confession, therefore, cannot be trusted and taken as true.

28. This is a somewhat filler line; it’s just an extension of the rack metaphor. No great mystery to figure out here.

29. confess and live: an inversion of the proverb, ‘Confess and be hanged (die).’ “Well then, confess the truth (that you love me) and you shall have life, you shall live.
As such, all Bassanio need do is confess his love for Portia and she will set him free, she will deliver him from the torture of the rack. But is this true? Portia never teaches Bassanio the answer that will deliver him, that will cause him to win Portia. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.38] [See Essays: The Lottery]

33. {O happy torment, when my torturer | Doth teach me answers for deliverance}

34. The exact meaning of this passage is unclear. At some point Bassanio comes to feel that he has the key or the answer to his deliverance (to winning Portia) but it remains uncertain how (or from whom) he received this sense. We find nothing in the words of Portia to give Bassanio this assuredness. The key or ‘answer’ to winning the lottery lies with Nerissa: if Bassanio can win Portia’s love, then Nerissa will give him a hint as to which casket to choose.

In terms of a production, Bassanio could get a knowing nod from Nerissa towards the end of Portia’s opening speech indicating that he had fulfilled the terms (i.e., that Portia loves him) and that he will surely get help from Nerissa. Thus Bassanio’s statement, ‘O happy torment, when my torturer | Doth teach me answers for my deliverance’ may apply to Nerissa, who has now given him the ‘go ahead’ and will ‘teach him the answer’—through the words of the song—that will release him of this torturous wait and enable him to win Portia.

Portia’s opening speech is, in no uncertain terms, an admission of her love. As part of the staging, after every few lines, Bassanio could look over toward Nerissa, asking with his eyes, ‘Is this enough?’ or ‘Does this not indicate that she loves me?’ erstwhile hoping to get the nod of approval. Bassanio may want the nod forthwith, while Nerissa wants to be a little more certain, and thus makes Bassanio wait a little longer. Thus, after getting the nod, Bassanio moves to make his choice as quickly as possible, feeling tortured by every second more he must wait.

35. {But let me to my fortune and the caskets}

The original does not end with a rhyming couplet.

a) / Doth teach me answers where I am set free | Now to the caskets where my fortune be

b) / Is but the sum of all I have to say | Now to my fortune and the chests, I pray.

/ Now to the caskets and my fortune, away!

A possible triplicate rhyme scheme: / Doth teach me answers where I am set free | (Like a kind jailor who throws me the key) | Now to my choice and my fortune to be
—Portia
Away then! I am locked in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out. 36
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aback.  
Let music sound° while he doth make his choice. 39
Then if he lose he’ll make a swan-like end, 40
Fading in music. That the metaphor°
May stand more proper;° my eyes shall be the stream°
And wat’ry death-bed for him. 43 Should he win°—
And what is music then? Then music is
The teeming flourish° of joyous° comets
That play to honor a new-crownèd monarch,
Or like the dulcet° sounds at break of day
That creep into° the dreaming bridegroom’s ear
And summon him to marriage.° Now he goes,

If you do love me: The lottery was designed to find Portia a man who would truly love her. Portia has (so far) been resisting the ‘wisdom’ of her father’s lottery, uncertain that such a device will find one who truly loves her—and also, uncertain, that it would find one whom she truly loves. But now, not able to intervene or prolong, Portia surrenders to her fate and her father’s lottery. Her words, If you do love me, you will find me out are more likely a hopeful prayer than a confirmation of the efficacy of her father’s lottery.

find me out: find the casket that holds my picture

This is not necessarily a directive for the musicians to begin playing. They could, however, being playing some kind of musical interlude at this point and go into their song when instructed to do so later in the scene.

Then if he lose he makes a swan-like end
a swan-like end: swans were associated with music and were believed to sing a song (a swan-song) before they died. This belief was also found in Plato, Euripides, and Aristotle, and commonly held as true during Shakespeare’s time: “It is said of the learned, that the swan, a little before her death, sings most pleasantly, as prophesied by a secret instinct her near destiny.” Shepherd’s Calendar (1597). The use of the term swan song, which is based on this supposition, now refers to the last great thing a person does before dying or the final work of a person’s life. The term swan song comes from the English translation of the German word schwatangesang. Here, the image of a swan singing before it dies is replaced by the tragic image of swan sinking to a watery death while sad music plays in the background.

That the comparison may stand more proper,
Mine eyes shall offer a river of tears
To thus provide for his watery death-bed.
With no less grandeur—but with much more love—

Than youthful Hercules when he did rescue

The virgin princess, paid in sacrifice

By yrring to placate Poseidon’s

Sea monster. I am now the sacrifice.

The rest around me are the Trojan wives,

To view the outcome of this grand exploit.

Go Hercules! If thou live, I will live:

But here I view with much, much more dismay

Then thou, the hero, who doth mak st the fray.

Nerissa instructs the musicians to play a song.

A song is played while Bassanio mulls over the caskets

46. / With no less dignity, but much more love
47. {Than young Alcides when he did redeem}
48. Refers to Hercules’s rescue of the virgin princess Hesione.
   [For the complete story from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, see Additional Notes, 3.2.56]
   **with much more love**: Hercules did not rescue Hesione out of love but for payment. Portia is bringing up this story, but then saying that Bassanio (coming with the same grandeur and dignity as Hercules) is coming with much more love, and trying to win her not as a mercenary, for some material gain, but out of love (something which Hercules did not have for the virgin princess he set forth to rescue). Hercules’s agreed-upon reward for saving Hesione was not her hand in marriage but her father’s magical horses.
49. {The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy}
   **howling**: crying out, lamenting, suffering. Only after the virgin princess was offered as a sacrifice to the sea-monster would the ravages and floods afflicting Troy be appeased.
50. / I stand for: I am, I represent
51. {I stand for sacrifice}
52. {The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives} / The rest back are the women of Troy
53. / To the sea-monster by the lamenting
   People of Troy. And now, ‘tis I who stand
   As sacrifice. And all those around me,
   Aghast in wonder, are the Trojan wives / horror / marvel
54. / Who now come forth with tears upon their cheeks
55. / With blearèd visages come forth to view | The issue of th’exploit. Go Hercules.
56. {With blearèd visages come forth to view | The issue of th’exploit. Go Hercules.}
57. / Live thou, I live}
   The sense is that if Hercules lives—and does not die in his attempt to rescue Hesione—then she will live 9be rescued). Thus, if Bassanio wins (lives), then Portia will be rescued (and live the life she wants.)
58. / Yet I do view this battle more with fright, | Than you who be in it—he who doth fight.
59. / Yet now I look with greater fear in me, | Then you who fight the monster o’ the sea.
60. In this stage direction Nerissa bids the musicians to play. This action is in support of the theory that Nerissa has come to ‘assist’ Bassanio with the lottery (because Portia fall in love with him). Many commentators hold that Bassanio receives help (on which casket to choose) from the rhyme scheme of the song (where the first three lines of the song rhyme with *lead*) and also by the lyrics of the song (which suggest the lead casket—if one is listening intently for such a clue). However, without Bassanio being ‘tipped off’ to listen carefully to the words of the song. To make it clear that Nerissa is giving Bassanio some kind of ‘hint’—and not actually telling him which casket to choose—she could be made to whisper a clue to Bassanio, such as: ‘With care, my lord, listen to the ending words of each line of the song.’ Some productions, supporting the view that Bassanio was ‘tipped off’ by the words of the song, put special emphasis on, and yell out, all the words in the song that rhyme with *lead*. 
[—Singer]
Tell me where is fancy bred,
In the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished? 61

(Or in) > Either in
/ How 'tis born and how 'tis fed?

[—Chorus]
Tell me, tell me. 61

(Reply, reply)

[—Singer]
It is engendered in the eyes,
/ Dull and heavy in the eyes
With gazing fed all fancy dies / With more gazing, come more lies
In the cradle, where it lies. / is where it lies / 'tis there it dies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell, 63
[spoken] I'll begin it: [sung] Ding, dong, bell. 63

[—Chorus]
Ding, dong, bell, 64

61. {Tell me where is fancy bred.} / Tell me where does loving start,
{Or in the heart, or in the head?} / In the head or in the heart?
{How begot, how nourished?} / Does it bind or rend apart?

The three lines of the original verse all end in words that rhyme with lead. This is often cited to support the argument that Bassanio was directed by the rhyme-scheme of this song to choose the lead casket. The words of the following verses may also provide clues in their warning against the fancy of the eyes, i.e., the gold and silver caskets—suggesting the choice of lead. As mentioned in the previous note, Bassanio would likely need a more obvious clue (such as a clear directive as to where to look for a clue) in order to make the connection between the rhyme-scheme and the lead casket. Nerissa telling Bassanio to listen carefully to the song, especially the last word in each line of the song, would be a hint regarding the location of the hint: Bassanio, intent on the casket—without the direction on where to look for a hint—might overlook the song and its lyrics completely. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.65] [See: Essays, The Lottery, for evidence suggesting that Bassanio received help with the lottery].

63. {Let us all ring fancy’s knell.} > Let us all put an end to fancy, ornament, ostentation
knell: a death bell, the solemn bell marking a death
> Let us put an end to fancy, ornament, ostentation. This points to the lead casket
Alt: Let the sun of fancy set, I'll begin—and you beget, And you will, but not quit yet
Chorus: What you give is what you get.

64. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.72, for facsimile of Q1 original]
—Bassanio [to the gold casket]

So may the outward shows be least themselves.  
The world is e’er deceived by ornament.  
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt  
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,  
Obscures the show of evil?  
In religion,  
What damned act does not become a blessing  
When some dry scholar approves it with text,  
Hiding gross error with fair ornament?  
There is no vice so simple but assumes  
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.  
How many cowards, who hearts are as false  
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins  
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,  
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk?  
They but assume the outer shows of valor   

/ Those who show most without are least within.  
[still] // grand displays  
/ argued with a glib and gracious voice  
/ act  
{error}  
{sober brow} // scripture  
/ Gilding  
/ no vice as it is  
/ have hearts that would crumble  
{stayers} / Like stairs  
/ fearless  
/ searched within  
/ a valiant outer show

65. The soliloquy found in the original is somewhat amiss as it does not resemble the speech of a true romantic hero nor does it fulfill the comic heroism suggested by the scene. Like the speeches of Morocco and Arragon, it is filled with discordant images and does not reflect love, pure-heartedness, or innocence. There is not one mention of Portia or her attributes here.

This soliloquy could be replaced with words and images more fitting of a romantic hero; even though Bassanio does not fully embody the virtues of a romantic hero (and often acts quite the opposite) he has the potential to become such a hero (if not permanently, at least for this one moment).

Bassanio’s speech, which cascades with images about scandal, cowardice, hypocrisy, criticalness—and vacant of any hint of love—may reflect a subconscious sense of his own duplicity. His speech in front of the caskets is somewhat out of step with the other speeches delivered by Bassanio in the scene—especially the one coming after he opens the casket and sees Portia’s picture [115-130]. Thus all his speeches, except for this one, bear the imprint of a romantic hero, or at least one in the making.

For a version of this speech, consistent with the heart-set of a romantic hero, see Additional Notes, 3.2.73

66. Orson Wells suggested that Bassanio could have played the parts of both Morocco and Arragon; and after two wrong choices (the gold and silver caskets) he would then become sure of the contents of the lead casket.

67. / Those who are least, display themselves the most / So are the outward shows e’er least themselves / It is the outward shows be least themselves / So they are least who glisten themselves most;  
still: always, ever; has always been  
ornament: lavish outer display: / appearance / its own beauty / empty dazzle  
69. / so simple but assumes] > Too singular and not able to assume (be interpreted as) some mark of virtue  
70. / And these but assume valour’s excrement] / And these but display the shows of valor / These cowards but assume valour’s plumage  
valour’s excrement: excrement refers to an outgrowth of hair (as hair was seen as a waste product, something excreted by the body). This refers to the beards usually associated with men of valour, as mentioned in line 85. It could also refer to the long hair of heroes but this is not supported in the given context.
To make themselves look fearful. Look on beauty And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight, This cream, when plied upon the face, does wonders Making them fairest who apply the most.

So are those crispèd, flowing, golden locks, Which maketh such wanton gambols with the wind;

But this supposed beauty, often known,

Is the hair taken from a second head,
The skull of which now lies in some lost grave.

Thus, outer show is but the guiled shore

To trap the wisest. Therefore gaudy gold,

You're as worthless to me as golden food

That vain King Midas could not hope to eat—

I will have none of thee. … Nor of thee, silver;

Thou art the pale drudge of common coin,

That’s passed between the grudging hands of men.

But thou, thou meager lead, which rather threaten'st

Than give a promise of profit or gain,

Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence.

71. {To entrap the wisest. Therefore, then, thou gaudy gold} {Hard food for Midas, I’ll none of thee.}

The first line, as found in Q1 has 13 syllables, and anomalies in the meter; thus most editions rectify the extra syllable by eliminating 'then.' Then, to keep the line in verse, the first two syllables and the fifth and sixth are elided (combined into one syllable). Hence, the most common rectification would read: T’en trap the wisest. T’fore thou gaudy gold.

**Hard food for Midas:** Refers to the legend of King Midas who was granted the wish that everything he touch turn to gold—which included his food and drink. Thus, gold, which in normal circumstance would have great value, was in this instance was the hard food (and therefore worthless) which Midas could not eat.

73. / You are none but the stuff of common coin, | Passed in exchange between the hands of men

74. The original ends in a two-line rhyme schema:

{Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence | And here chose I. May joy be the consequence!}

To preserve this rhyme scheme, and make it consistent with the new lines that follow, the second line could be amended as such: “If I choose here, is joy my consequence?”

In this rendition, Bassanio’s soliloquy is amended with three lines that calrify and explain his reasoning. These lines could be seen as an extension of the previous lines where Bassanio says, “But thou, thou meager lead | Which rather threaten’st than dost promise aught.” These lines reveal the secret to the riddle and why a true man of the heart would choose the lead casket: he is selfless, inclined to give and sacrifice (as offered by lead) and not to gain or get (as promised by silver and gold.)

75. / as is sanctioned / as sanctionèd / as betokened / as warranted
(Here, here chose I. When all is done and said\textsuperscript{a} A heart that giveth\textsuperscript{o} all can ne’er be misled.\textsuperscript{o})\textsuperscript{78} / when everything is said / all is finished

—Portia \textit{[aside]}

How all the other passions fleet to air,
These\textsuperscript{o} doubtful thoughts and rash-embraced despair;
And shudd’ring fear, and green-eyed jealousy
O love be sparing\textsuperscript{o}, ease\textsuperscript{o} thy ecstasy. \textsuperscript{79} \textsuperscript{80} / I fear this fortune is too much for me

In measure, rein\textsuperscript{o} thy joy; scant\textsuperscript{o} this excess! \textsuperscript{81} / raine / rain / hold // block / stint

I feel too much thy blessings\textsuperscript{o}—make it less \textsuperscript{82} \textsuperscript{83} \textsuperscript{84} / I fear these feelings o’er flow

[For I fear surfeit] \textsuperscript{85}

—Bassanio \textit{[opening the leaden casket]}

What find I here? A portrait of fair Portia.
What demigod hath fashioned such a picture
That comes so near to God’s own creation,
That\textsuperscript{o} makes this image ride upon my eyes

Such that it seems to move and yet move not? \textsuperscript{86} \textsuperscript{88} / To make

---

\textsuperscript{78} Here, here I choose: when all is said and done | A heart that gives all has already won
\textsuperscript{79} / O heart be mild, allay this love in me.
\textsuperscript{80} Alt: Replace this line with three lines:

I fear this love’s made a fool-sop\textsuperscript{o} of me. / pansy / milksop
O heart be sparing, temper this delight,
O ration joy, don’t give it such a might.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{raine}: rain down, dole out, give out. \textit{in measure}: in limited and controlled amounts, as not to flood or overwhelm.
Here there is the play of oppositions, where Portia is calling for rain, which is associated with abundance, but herein asking that it be given in measure. \textit{Rain} will also be heard as \textit{rein}, which would mean control, hold back, rein in.

\textsuperscript{82} / In measure rein thy joy, scant this delight!
Thy blessings overflow—appease their might. / I feel too much thy blessings—ease their might.

\textsuperscript{83} / How all my passions fleet upon the air:
First gone is doubt, then rash-embraced despair;
This fear and monstrous jealousy be gone / jeal’sy have left me. // are done
O love, be kind—don’t turn more pleasure on / be moderate, tame thy ecstasy; // thy pleasure shun
In measure rein thy joy, tame this excess;
I feel too much thy blessings—make it less! / I fear thy blessing’s too great.

\textsuperscript{84} This verse ensonsces Portia in the comical quality of the play; here we see her love is fully expressed and ‘over the top’—more a characterture expression of love than anything we might find in real life. \[See Additional Notes, 3.2.113\]

\textsuperscript{85} / For I fear surfeit. The original line is orphaned, does not follow the rhyme-scheme or meter of the lines which precede it, and simply repeats the theme mentioned previously. Thus it weakens and flattens the impact of Portia’s rhyming verse. To fully embody this appendage, this truncated line is emended with a full pair of rhyming lines; or, a more economical solution would be to simply delete the partial line.

\textsuperscript{86} / O in the waves of love’s ocean I’m lost: | Beyond all hopes, and ignoring all cost.
\textsuperscript{87} / O, in the heat of love’s fire I’m swelt’ring | Lost in the blessedness\textsuperscript{o} of mine own melting.

\textsuperscript{88} / What find I here? | Fair Portia’s counterfeit. What demi-god | Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes

—What (artist, possessing\textsuperscript{o}) / wielding
The spectral powers of a \textsuperscript{a} demigod
Hath come so near creation? What is this?
And here, her gentle \(\text{o}\) lips lay slightly open
Parted with sugar breath. So sweet an air\(\text{o}\)
Should sunder such sweet friends.\(^9^8\) And in her hair
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh \(\text{t'}\) entrap the hearts of men
Faster than\(^9^0\) gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes—
How could he see to do them? Having made one,
Methinks its power should steal both his eyes
And leave the work\(\text{o}\) undone.\(^9^1\) Yet look how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow\(\text{o}\)
In underprizing it, just as this copy\(\text{o}\)
Doth limp behind her true form.\(^9^2\) Here’s the scroll,
The continent\(^9^3\) and summ’ry of my fortune: \(^9^4\)

\begin{center}
\textit{You that\(\text{o}\) choose not by the view,}
\textit{Chance as fair and choose as true.}
\textit{Since this fortune falls to you,}
\textit{Be content, and seek no new.}
\end{center}

\(^9^8\) \{ . . . Here are severed lips | Parted with sugar breath. So sweet a bar | Should sunder such sweet friends.\}\)
\(^9^9\) \{faster than:\ a) more quickly than, b) more securely than (as in ‘bind fast’)\)
\(^9^1\) \{undone:\ a) without finishing the portrait, b) without being able to furnish the second eye\)
\(^9^2\) \{Doth limp behind the substance\} The metaphor of ‘limping behind the substance’ refers to something which falls short of the real thing (substance), and specifically to a lifeless shadow which follows, or ‘limps behind,’ the form of a real person. \textit{Limp}, moreover, implies a defective or imperfect kind of following which is not found in the term ‘walk behind’ or ‘follow behind.’ Bassanio is here invoking the Neo-platonic theme of opposites highlighted by the contrasting concepts of \textit{substance} and \textit{shadow}. Hence, Bassanio is saying that the ‘\textit{substance} of my praise (i.e., my words) does wrong this \textit{shadow} (this portrait) in underprizing it (failing to capture its beauty)—just as this \textit{shadow} (picture) falls short of (limps behind) the \textit{substance} (the real Portia), i.e., his words (as eloquent as they are) do no justice (fall short) in describing the beauty of this portrait, just as this portrait (as wondrous as it is) does no justice in capturing Portia’s true beauty.\)
\(^9^3\) \{continent:\ contents, container. \textit{Continent} can also be an oblique reference to the fullness, totality, or grandeur of my fortune (as in the size of a continent).\)
\(^9^4\) \{Doth limp behind the substance. Here’s the scroll, | The continent and summary of my fortune\}
\(/\text{Doth limp behind the living form of Portia}\\/\text{Falls hopelessly}^\circ\text{ short of the real Portia.}/ \text{lifelessly}^\circ \text{dreadfully}\\/\text{Here’s the scroll, the summ’ry (/summate) of my fortune:} \[\text{See Additional Notes, 3.2.129}\]
If you be well-pleased with this,  
And hold your fortune for your bliss,  
Turn ye toward your loving miss  
And claim her with a loving kiss.  

A gentle scroll! Fair lady, by your leave  
I come by note, to give and to receive.  
Just like a fighter who obtains the prize,  
Who thinks he’s done well in the people’s eyes,  
Hearing applause and the echoing shout  
Giddy in spirit, yet gazing in doubt,  
Whether those clam’ring cheers be his or no,  
So, thrice-fair lady stand I even so,  
As doubtful whether what I see be true,  
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.  

—Portia  
You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
Such as I am. Though, for myself alone,  
I would not be so daring in my wish  
To wish myself much better, yet for you

95. It is not clear as to when—if ever—Bassanio claims Portia with a loving kiss. Some productions, concurring with Rowe (a foremost commentator of the early 18th century), have Bassanio claim Portia (with a loving kiss) at the end of this line (I come by note, to give and to receive) after handing her the note. This timing is doubtful since (later in the same passage) Bassanio tells of his confusion, his unassurance, and so he would not be in a position to claim Portia. Others have the loving kiss come after line 148 (Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you)—which is still somewhat early. The kiss can also come after Portia’s line [167], Myself and what is mine to you and yours | Is now converted. It can also occur after Portia gives him the ring, in line 174 (And be my vantage to exclaim on you). In the original there is no stage direction for the kiss nor any clear pause or indication as to when such a kiss would be planted. We cannot say for sure that one is even given.

96. To coincide with the words, ‘I come by note,’ Bassanio could offer Portia the scroll.

99. / Amidst a great applause and thun’rous shout

100. What confirmation does Bassanio seek?—that he has won the lottery (which is apparent) or that he has won the true fortune of the lottery, i.e., Portia’s love. Bassanio is doubtful (unsure) about the truth of what he sees; he sees Portia smiling at him (and seemingly pleased with the outcome) but he wants assurance, he wants her to affirm not only that he has won the lottery (which is apparent) but also that he has indeed won her heart and the fullness of her love (which is not, in his mind, assured by the lottery). [See Additional Notes, 3.2.148]

101. Bassanio talks only of his confusion—when, in fact, there really should be no confusion at all. In the first soliloquy, after opening the casket, he describes the picture of Portia (but not her) with glowing words; after reading the scroll, he talks of his uncertainty; after his uncertainty is pacified, he talks about his joyful bodily confusion—but not once does he actually speak of Portia, nor her beauty, nor his love for her, nor his assumed state of joy. All his talk is indirect, metaphorical, speaking of a picture, of winning a fight, of buzzing cheers—but never once of Portia. Not once, in all his talk, does he even mention her name.

Is this the way a true hero would approach it?—winning without even recognizing it? Being confused and unsure? Or would a hero take hold of this triumphant moment and use it as a glorified opportunity to now give full expression to his (previously bridled) love?

102. / I am content and would not dare to wish | That I, myself, be better, yet for you
I would be tripled² twenty times myself;  
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times 
More rich, that I, in beauty, dignity,  
Comfort,² and virtue might exceed account.  

But the full sum of me is some² of something  
(That’s yet to be complete.) To term more fully:  
I’m² an unlessoned girl,² unschooled, unpracticed²;  
Happy in this, she is not yet so old 
But she may learn; and happier than this, 
She is not bred so dull that she can learn;² 
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit 
Commits itself to yours, to be directed 
As from her lord, her governor, her king.² 
Myself and what is mine, to you and yours,² 
I now impart.² But now I was the lord 
Of this fair mansion,² master of my servants, 
Queen o’er myself; and even now, yet now, 
This house, these servants, and my very self,² 
Are yours, my lord.² I give them with this ring 

She holds up ring

²[Trebled] / better
³[Living] / friendship
⁴Part
⁵Advised more fully
⁶[Is] / unfinished
⁷[My lord’s]

103. [I would be trebled twenty times myself] / I would have myself tripled twenty times
104. / And friendship might stand high in your account.
105. / More rich, that only to stand high in your account] 
106. An alternative punctuation would yield this rendering: 
   / More rich—to stand but high in your account 
   I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends / I hope that I, in virtue, beauty, friends 
   Exceed account.
107. / But the full summe of me | Is sume of something: which, to term in gross} 
   Some (or sum): Q1 has sume which can be read as sum or some. Both reading, though differing in nuance, are 
   essentially the same, both diminutive and somewhat self-deprecating: 
   Sum of something: implies that the full sum of Portia is only the sum (totality) of something (and not everything); that 
   her full self is incomplete (i.e., that of an unlessoned girl who still has much to learn) 
   Some of something: refers to a “portion of a portion”—again something which suggests a lack that Bassanio, as her 
   new lord, could fill and make whole. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.158]
108. / (That’s yet to reach its fullness.) Thus, in sum, / (Has not yet ripened.) Thus, to state it fully / Hence, to put it bluntly 
   / (That’s yet to be completed.) Termed more fully
109. / (To term in gross) / in sum, to say in full, to tell you the whole story, to tell you (the whole) truth. Gross might also 
   refer to blunt honesty, and frankness, and could be akin to such an expression as “to say in all honesty.”
110. / I’m as a schoolgirl—untrained, unpracticed
Which, when you part from, lose, or give away, \(^{111}\)
‘Twill mark the ruin of your love, I say. \(^{112}\)
And give me reason\(^e\) to regret\(^o\) the day. \(^{113}\) \(^{114}\)

\textit{She places ring on Bassanio’s finger}

—Bassanio

Madam, you have bereft me of all words, \(^o\)
All that can speak\(^o\) is the blood in my veins; \(^{116}\)
And there is such confusion in my powers, \(^o\) \(^{117}\)
Much like\(^o\) the buzzing cheers that issue from
The rousèd\(^o\) masses after they have heard
Some fine oration by their sovereign\(^o\) prince, \(^{118}\) \(^{119}\)
Where every something\(^o\), being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy. \(^o\) \(^{121}\) \(^{122}\)
(And now in me, each voice is lost, \(^o\) each cry)
Expressed yet not expressed. \(^{123}\)

When this ring parts

\(^{111}\) {Which when you part from, lose, or give away}
\textit{when}: implies an inevitability or an outcome which is expected to happen, whereas \textit{if} does not imply such inevitability.

\(^{112}\) {Let it presage the ruin of your love}
\textit{vantage}: just cause, give me cause, advantage, a good reason.
\textit{to exclaim}: yell, rail, fume, scream, denounce, etc. \textit{(ex-claim}: give up your claim on me.)

\(^{113}\) {And be my vantage to exclaim on you.}
\textit{And give me cause to berate you all day}.

\(^{114}\) \{See Additional Note, 3.2.174\}

\(^{116}\) {Only my blood speaks to you in my veins}
\textit{powers}: a) power of speech; ability to speak or articulate; b) power of intellect and will; ability to match what is in the mind with the words
\textit{As} great confusion besieges my words / And great confusion sieges all my words / And great confusion hems my power of speech / As great confusion besieges all my words / As all my powers of speech are confused.

\(^{117}\) \{As after some oration fairly spoke | By a beloved prince there doth appear\}
\textit{As} after hearing some well-spoken words (/fine oration) | By a beloved prince who doth appear
\textit{Like buzzing cheers, come from the rousèd masses} | When hearing\(^o\) words from their beloved prince
\textit{Like ecstatic (/rapturous) applause of the masses} | Arising from the masses / that come from pleasèd crowds
\textit{‘Tis like the buzzing cheers of pleasèd masses}.

\(^{118}\) \{See Additional Note, 3.2.174\}

\(^{119}\) \{The rousèd masses after their beloved \} Prince doth appears and give some fine oration.

\(^{121}\) \{Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy\}
\textit{Turns to a wilderness of un’fied\(^o\) joy} / mingled

\(^{122}\) \{See Additional Notes, 3.2.183\}
My finger, know that life does part my stead  
O, then be bold to say, ‘Bassanio’s dead.’

—Nerissa
My lord and lady, it is now our time;  
We have stood by and seen our wishes prosper  
Now we cry, ‘Joy, good joy, my lord and lady!’

—Gratiziano
My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,  
I wish you all the joy that one can wish,  
For I am sure, whate’er you’d wish for me  
(Would fall e’er short of what I now possess.)  
And when your honours mean to seal with vows  
The pledging of your faith, I do beseech you  
Still at that time, I may be wed as well.

—Bassanio
With all my heart—if thou canst get a wife.

—Gratiziano
I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

124. {But when this ring | Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence}  
/ But when this ring | Parts from this finger, then parts life instead  
/ When this ring parts | My finger, then I find an earthen bed  
My finger, then . . . / be sure my life has fled / ever my life’s been shed / my life does part instead / my life has surely fled
125. Previously, when Bassanio is unsure whether he has truly won Portia [141-45], he uses imagery of a crowd cheering for its champion. Here, when it is confirmed that he has doubtless won his prize, he again invokes the imagery of a cheering, buzzing crowd, where all the voices can be heard (rather the joy of the voices) rather than any individual voice. These images are akin and both refer to the impersonal cheering of a crowd—for its champion or its prince—but none evoke the personal images of love. Why is it, however, that Bassanio cannot speak? Is he overwhelmed with joy? Why is there such confusion in his powers, in his ability to articulate how he feels? All these impersonal images may come to sound like a rouse, where Bassanio is insinuating that he loves Portia, that he is speechless with joy—but where he may be speechless because he cannot truly tell Portia that he loves her. Never once in all these words does he confirm his love for Portia (as he asks her to do); rather he only intimates and suggests his love by way of his dazed state. He talks about the buzzing cheers of the multitudes (where no single voice can be heard) and never do we hear our hero give words to any singular expression of love. (Again, it is cleverly suggested—and one might leave with the impression that he loves Portia—but his words never blossom into a true and unmistakably expression of love. His final words relate to the image of his own death—and something which may take place in the distant future—but never to his living heart, now. Are these the words of someone in love?—or someone not in love and trying to give the impression (without actually lying) that he is in love?
126. {O then be bold to say, ‘Bassanio’s dead.’}  
127. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.185]
1. {I wish you all the joy that you can wish | For I am sure you can wish none from me.} I wish that you obtain all the joy that you wish for yourselves—and in your wishing, I am sure that you need not include me (and wish something for me) since I have already obtained the fullness of what I (or anyone else) might wish for me.
2. / Falls short of what I already possess / Is but a thing that I already have / I now possess in the fullest of measure, / Is short of what I already possess
3. / When your honored selves are ready to take | The vows that seal your faith, I beseech you
4. / (Even at that time) / That at such time / E’en at that time
5. [I may be married too]
Taking Nerissa’s hand

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved—and now this timely pause
No more pertains to you, my lord, than me.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
And, as the matter falls, so too did mine.
For I did woo until I ran with sweat,
And swearing till my very roof went dry
With oaths of love, at last—if promise last
I get the promise of this fair one here,
To have her love, provided ‘twas your fate
To win her mistress.

—Portia Is this true, Nerissa?
— Nerissa Madam, it is, if you stand pleased with it.
—Bassanio And do you, Gratiano, speak in truth?
— Gratiano In truth, my lord.
—Bassanio Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

—Gratiano [to Nerissa]

6. [for intermission]: taking a break (from action); inactivity; a rest period (wherein one does not pursue the object of his love)
You loved; I loved . . . / and to postpone that love / and bearing such delays / to stay the fruits thereof
/ You loved the one and I loved the other— / And neither one could bear the long delay.
/ You loved the one, and I the other—neither / Could you nor I, endure the long delay.
7. [And so did mine too, as the matter falls] / And like as well, as fate would fall, did mine.
8. / You loved the one, and I did love the other; / And neither you, my lord, nor I, could bear / A long delay. Your fortune stood upon / Your choice, so too, as fate would fall, did mine.
9. / And swore with oaths of love until my roof / And swore until my very roof went dry,
   Went dry, until at last—if promise last— / With oaths of love, until at last—assuming
   I got the promise from this fair one here / Her promise last—I got this fair one’s promise
10. / To have her love, provided ‘twas your fate / To win her mistress.
    / To have her love, if so your fortune be / To win her mistress.
    / To have her love, provided that your fortune / Did win her mistress
11. Gratiano must abide by Nerissa’s fateful terms, which are: only if Bassanio chooses the right casket (and wins Portia) will Gratiano and Nerissa be able to be together. (Gratiano would never impose such absurd terms upon his own love).
Why were such terms imposed by Nerissa? What meaning did they have? Nerissa must have been sure that Bassanio would win Portia—sure enough to stake her own happiness upon it. And how did she become so sure of such a fate?
[See Additional Note, 3.2.196]
We’ll place a wager for a thousand ducats {play with them}
That the first boy be ours.

—Nerissa

What, and stake down? 13

—Gratziano

No, we shall ne’er win that wager with stake down! 14
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio? 15

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica, with Salerio, a messenger from Venice 16

—Bassanio

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new int’rest here
Have power to bid you welcome. [Portia nods] By your leave
I bid my very friends and countrymen 17
Sweet Portia, welcome. 18

—Portia

So do I, my lord.
You² are entirely welcome.  {They}

— Lorenzo [to Bassanio]

I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose² was not to have seen you here, 19 / intent
But having met² Salerio by the way² 20 {But meeting with} // road
He did entreat me past all saying ‘nay’

---

12. / We’ll play with them a thousand ducat wager
13. stake down: to lay down money (on a table) to cover a bet. The term is similarly used in ‘staking one’s claim.’
14. / No, we shall ne’er win at that sport and stake down! / No, we shall ne’er win that bet with my stake down!
   stake down: In the first instance (as used by Nerissa) stake down mean to secure or place down money to cover a wager; in the second instance, used here, the phrase refers to a male stake, or erection. Gratziano is saying that they can never win the wager (to have the first boy) with his stake down (as opposed to up). Some productions have Gratziano play out this bawdy imagery by holding a stick or a stretched piece of fabric in the position of an erection and then lowering it when he mentions that he cannot win the bet with his stake down.
15. Salerio needs to be introduced here by name and by reference (Venetian) because this is the first time the audience sees the character. Some editors, for the sake of economy (though in error) combine the two minor characters of Salerio and Salarino, into a single character (Salerio). However, nothing in the text—or anywhere else—supports this kind of compaction. Had Gratziano’s good friend, Salarino, arrived here (as opposed to Salerio, a messenger) Gratziano would have greeted him more personally, with something like, ‘my good friend Salarino,’ as opposed to the rather reserved and distant, ‘my old Venetian friend Salerio.’ Neither would Gratziano have ‘located’ Salarino as being ‘from Venice,’ since the audience already knows that Salarino is from Venice, having seen him several times before. [See Essays: The Sallies: Salarino, Salanio, and Salerio]
16. Salerio, who makes his entrance for the first time, needs an introduction—and so he is identified as a ‘messenger from Venice’ in the stage direction.
17. / With your permission, my sweet and fair Portia, | I bid my friends welcome. / dulcet / cherubic
18. { … By your leave, | I bid my very friends and countrymen, | Sweet Portia, welcome.}
19. / My intention was not to see you here
20. Where along the way could they have met?—the way in question is the 20-mile stretch of land that lies between Venice and Belmont.
To come along with him.  

—Salerio I did, my lord, And with good reason: Dear Antonio sends / good cause: Signor Antonio sends An urgent message.  

He gives Bassanio a letter  

—Bassanio Ere I ope his letter / But before I read it I pray you, tell me, how my good friend doth? / how fairs my good freind?  

— Salerio Not sick, my lord, but ill in mind and spirit.  

His letter there will show you his condition.  

21. At this point, Bassanio is unaware that Lorenzo (and Jessica) stole away with Shylock’s money (and have since been on the run). Portia knows nothing about Lorenzo, Jessica, nor anything of the events that have taken place in Venice. For the sake of drama, we must compress the inevitable time gap: Jessica and Lorenzo stole Shylock’s money on the night that Bassanio left for Belmont; Bassanio forgoing the offer to tarry ‘a day or two’ immediately proceeded to his choice. This indicates that Bassanio left Venice no more than about two days ago, while several weeks of action have passed since Lorenzo and Jessica left Venice. For instance, Tubal went out in search of them in Genoa (which is some 200 miles distance from Venice). [See: Essays: Time Warp]  

22. {And I have reason for it} Salerio does not offer any reason for it (for bringing along Lorenzo) since he could have delivered the message without any help; in addition, we know why he entreated Lorenzo to come with him to Belmont ‘past all saying nay.’ But what reasons might he have? It could be that Lorenzo was Bassanio’s good and that Salerio—who was not such a friend, but only a messenger—was about to deliver some devastating news. Hence, Salerio thought is would be helpful if Lorenzo, Bassanio’s good friend, were there to help comfort him. Understanding the gravity of the matter, Salerio may have insisted that Lorenzo come because of Jessica, and because he thought that she might be able to provide some help or shed some light on the situation (but this might be crediting Salerio with deep insight into the matter). As it turns out, Jessica’s presence (not Lorenzo’s) proves crucially important to the situation (and in Portia’s decision to intervene).  

23. {And I have reason for it: Signor Antonio | Commends him to you} / Sends you a message. commends him to you: A familiar greeting, akin to ‘Sends his regards’ or ‘Asks that you remember him.’ The passage would support Salerio’s previous claim to having a ‘reason,’ if it had more import, such as: ‘Signor Antonio | Sends you an urgent message.’ This import could be imparted by adding the word ‘urgent.’ These extra syllables could be accommodated by deleting the two previous—somewhat superfluous—syllables, ‘for it,’ or truncating Bassanio’s response (from five syllables to three).  

/ And I have cause for it: Antonio sends | And urgent message.  
/ And I have reason: for an urgent message | Comes from Antonio.  
Sal.: / . . . | Sends you an urgent message.  
Bas: Ah, but first.  

24. For dramatic purposes (and perhaps blinded by love) Bassanio is completely forgetful of the date that the bond expires: he is asking about how Antonio is doing {how my good friend doth} rather than the fate of the bond. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.231]  

25. {Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind; | Nor well, unless in mind.}  

Salerio’s response is vague and elusive at best; Antonio is clearly in a desperate state and Salerio does not want to be the one to report such bad news. His vague answer means something like: he is not sick in terms of body, but sick if we are speaking about the state of his mind (i.e., he is worried, distraught, fearful, etc.); he is not well unless he imagines it to be so. Clearly he is not well. The wordplay is on the word mind, which in the first instance refers to his mental condition or state of mind and in the second refers to his imagination or use of mind. Some commentators, unable to make real sense out of this passage, interpret {unless in mind} to mean: ‘unless his fortitude allows him to suffer his misfortune’ (Kittredge); ‘unless he is comforted by fortitude’ (Brown)  

26. Due to the vagueness of this unimportant passage it has herein been condensed into one line. If one desired to bring clarity to this response, the lines could be expanded:  

/ Not sick, unless we speak about his mind;  
/ Nor well, unless he imagine it so.  

27. / His note will show the state of his affairs.
Bassanio opens the letter and reads it.

—Gratzianno
Nerissa cheer our guest,28 [Jessica] entreats her welcome. [bid] / beseech
Your note,9 Salerio. What news from Venice? [hand] 29
How is that royal merchant,30 good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success:
Like the Jasons, we have won the fleece. / Like Jason, we have won the golden fleece

—Salerio
I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.32
[I loathe to say,9 but all his ships are gone.]33 / I tell you now

—Portia [seeing Bassanio]
Yon paper must display some fell content.34 / dispatch // cursed
To steal the color from Bassanio’s cheek.
Some dear friend dead?—else nothing in the world
Could so completely turn the disposition / full // steady nature
Of any constant man. 37 What, worse and worse? 38

Bassanio looks worse than before

With leave Bassanio, I am half yourself, / O please
And I must freely have the half of all / anything / whate’er

28. {cheer yon stranger} Jessica, who was previously called ‘infidel’ is here referred to as ‘stranger’—meaning an outsider, i.e., non-Christian. Thus Gratzianno wants to make a special effort to welcome her.
29. hand: > the note or news you carry in your hand
30. that royal merchant: This address is somewhat aloof. Had Salerio been a friend of Antonio (as is Salarino and Salanio), Gratzianno might have said, “How is our good friend, Antonio?” Royal, in this context, is a superlative meaning, ‘princely,’ ‘grand,’ ‘great,’ etc.
32. Fleece is a pun on fleets: I wish you had won the fleece [fleets] that he has lost, i.e., Antonio has lost all his fleets, and I wish the fleets that you had won could make up for his losses.
33. / I’m loathe to say it: all his ships are gone
34. {There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper} / It seems yon paper holds some cursèd content / carries cursed news / carries news afool
shrewd: often interpreted to mean, ‘evil,’ ‘cursed,’ ‘unfortunate,’ ‘harmful,’ ‘grievous’ etc. but the term is more likely taken at face value, to mean, ‘clever,’ or ‘crafty’ (or ‘sharp’) in that the words are able to steal away (by some clever or tricky means) the color from Bassanio’s face. We often see the word ‘Beshrew’ which is mild scold or swear.
36. {Could turn so much the constitution} / Could turn with such precision,9 the nature / dreadfulness
/ Could so fully reverse the disposition / alter
37. constant man: steady, unwavering, self-controlled
Portia is describing Bassanio as a constant, steadfast, reliable, and steady man. Clearly she is not aware of Bassanio’s true character—as an irresponsible spendthrift and risk-taker. (But this is something she is going to soon learn about). Here she is judging him on her idealized and imagined version of him.
38. / Of such a self-controlled man. What, and worse?
That this same paper brings you.

—Bassanio

O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the most dreadful words,

That ever blotted paper. Gentle lady, 59

When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, (that I had nothing but

The favored status of) a gentleman. 40

And what I spoke was true. 41

And yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, o you shall see,
How much I was a braggart. 42 When I told you

My state was nothing, I should then have said

That I was less o than nothing, for indeed
I have obliged myself to a dear friend o

And, out of love for me o, he offered to

Indebted himself to a dear enemy. 43 44

(What have I done? ) Here is the letter, lady,

The paper is o the body of my friend 45

With o every word in it a gaping wound
Issuing life-blood. 46 But it is true, Salerio,

Hath all his ventures failed? What, o not one hit? 47

From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Africa, and India—
And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

—Salerio Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature that did bear the shape of man
So keen and greedy to destroy a man.
He plies the Duke at morning and at night
And calls in doubt the freedom of the state
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port have all tried to dissuade him
But none can drive him from the savage plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

—Jessica
I heard him swear, to Tubal and to others,
That he would rather have Antonio’s flesh
Then twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
If law, the Duke, and power stay him not
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

—Portia [to Bassanio]
Is it your dear friend who is thus in trouble?

—Bassanio
The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,

49. {have all persuaded with him} > have all tried to dissuade him, have all argued with him
50. Portia may suspect that Jessica is Jewish from her appearance and from Gratziano’s former greeting—But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? [216]—yet she has no way of knowing that she is daughter of the ‘Jew’ whom Salerio is so loathsomely describing. From this reference, however, it may become clear to that Jessica is related to the ‘Jew’ in question.
51. The original reads: “When I was with him I have heard him swear | To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen.” Jessica’s account is unlikely—since Shylock began swearing and making oaths to have his bond (and go hard on Antonio) only after Jessica betrayed him—but it must be taken at face value. Thus, according to what Jessica heard, Shylock’s intention, from the beginning, was Shylock’s thin hope that Antonio’s ventures would fail and that he could take Antonio’s life, in accordance with the bond. (It could also be that Shylock was letting his emotions get the better of him or “strutting his stuff” when telling his fellow countrymen that he would rather have his bond than 20 times his principle (60,000 ducats). Given that Shylock said he wanted Jessica dead at his feet, when she stole far less a sum, tells us that, when enraged, Shylock says things that he does not truly mean. Thus, here, we should not take Shylock’s words at face value but interpret them as a gross exaggeration.

In this rectification Shylock’s intent in making the bond for a poud of flesh was not a far-fetched scheme to try and kill Antonio but rather to humiliate him. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.283]
The most benev’lent° and unwearied° spirit
In serving others;° and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

—Portia
What sum owes he the Jew? 55

—Bassanio
For me, three thousand ducats.

—Portia What—no more?
Pay him six thousand and deface° the bond.
Double six thousand and then triple° that 56
Before a friend of such kindeness and worth° 57
Shall° lose a hair through° Bassanio’s fault.
First go with me to church and call me ‘wife’°
And then away to Venice, to your friend. 58
For never shall you lie by Portia’s side
With an unquiet soul. 59 You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over. 60
When it is paid, bring your friend home with you.
Meanwhile, my good Nerissa and myself
Will live as maids° and widows. Come, away,

55. To preserve the meter, the verse could be rectified as follows:
   *Portia*: What sum owes he the Jew?
   *Bass*: Three thousand ducats.
   *Portia*: A mere three thousand ducats—what no more?
56. / I’d double the six and triple that before . . .
   Portia is offering to resolve the issue with a generous show of more and more money. At this point she is still unaware of, or unconvinced of, Shylock’s resolve to take Antonio’s flesh even after hearing from Salerio [3.2.270-2] and Jessica [3.2.284-85] that no amount of money would cause ‘the Jew’ to ‘deface’ the bond.
57. / Before a friend so endearing and true
58. This directive is to prompt the occupied Bassanio to the temple to take his wedding vows before he rushes off. Clearly Bassanio’s concern for Antonio has eclipsed all the joy found in his newly won love and wealth. Note: there is no indication that rings were ever exchanged as part of this wedding ceremony.
59. Portia is saying: I will not let you lie by my side with an unquiet soul (a restless and disturbed mind); I will only let you lie by my side when you can give yourself to me fully, when you can be with me whole-heartedly.
60. Again, Portia is not convinced of Shylock’s true intention, nor that the bond cannot be cured with wealth—even with twenty times the amount owed—even though this is the specific number that Jessica previously mentions, saying, *That he would rather have Antonio’s flesh| Than twenty time the value of the sum| That he did owe him.* [3.2.284-86]
For you shall hence on your wedding day. / leave > go forth hence
Since you were bought at O so dear a price / at such a heavy price
I’ll bear the wait for love not once but twice. / the weight of love

—Gratziano
But let us hear the letter from Antonio. / But wait—let’s hear

—Bassanio [reads]
‘Dear Bassanio, my ships have all been lost, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit. And since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I—if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, do as you please. If your love does not persuade you to come, let not my letter.’

—Portia
O love, dispatch all business and be gone! / betake your vows and then be gone

—Bassanio
Since I have your good leave to go away
I will make haste, but I go in dismay
All beds that beckon, I’ll solemnly spurn,°
And slumber ne’er° a wink, til I return.⁷⁰

/ All beds that call, I will solemnly spurn
/ And shall not sleep

_Exeunt_⁷¹

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70. The original reads:
   “Since I have your good leave to go away,
   I will make haste, but till I come again,
   No bed shall e’er be guilty of my stay,
   Nor rest be interposed ‘twixt us twain.”

   Here Bassanio makes the customary vow of the romantic hero—which is that he will not sleep until the task is
   completed and he returns to his beloved. This passage remains a vestige of the fairy tale qualities of a romantic hero and not
   a vow one should take at face value. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.324]

71. A comical stage direction could be as follows: _Bassanio rushes to make a hasty exit, stage right—toward Venice—but is
caught by the elbow, and swung do-see-do, to stage left by Portia—toward the church._
A street outside Shylock’s house.

Enter Shylock, Antonio, Salarino, Salanio, and a Jailer.  

—Shylock

Jailor, keep your watch. Tell me not of mercy. This is the fool who lends out money gratis. Jailor, keep your watch.

—Antonio

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

— Shylock

〈Now I am “good”? I say, my bond is good!〉

I’ll have my bond. Speak not against my bond. I’ve sworn an oath that I will have my bond. You call’dst me ‘dog’ before you hadst a cause, But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.

The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,

Thou wicked jailor, why art thou so foolish To let him walk about at his request.

1. The stage direction of Q1 reads ‘Enter the Jew’ and all speech headings read ‘Jew.’ (The actually reading is ‘Enter the Jew,’ as I was often replaced J.)

2. The stage direction of Q1 reads:

   Enter the Jew, and Salerio, and Anthonio, and the Jailor.

   The name Salerio in the stage heading (instead of Salarino or Salanio) is likely an error made by the compositor (or print house editor). The original stage heading may have read: ‘Enter the Jew, Anthonio, and others’—where the ‘others’ was meant to indicate Salarino and Salanio and the Jailor, but not Salerio. (Another anomaly in this stage direction is that the name of a minor character, Salerio, appears before Anthonio.) Salerio, as we know, is in Belmont delivering a message to Bassanio and could not be present in this scene. Most editors rectify this error in the stage heading by replacing ‘Salerio’ with ‘Salanio’ (or Salanio), assuming that there is a one-to-one correspondence between Salerio and one of the two other Sals. (Q2 replaces Salerio with Salarino, while F1 has Solanio.) Thus, this scene is almost always played with Salanio alone, or in some cases with Salarino alone, but not with both characters present, which is the most likely scenario. In sum, the name of Salerio in the stage direction is clearly an error but the replacement of Salerio with either Salanio or Salarino is also not certain. Since Salarino and Salanio always appear together, it is most likely that both Salarino and Salanio were intended to appear in this scene as well. [See Additional Notes, 3.3.0a]

3. In this scene Shylock is dwelling in the newfound sense of power he has over Antonio by not letting Antonio speak. [See Additional Notes, 3.3.0]

4. good: reference is made to the double meaning of this word: good in the sense of being righteous, and good in the sense of being sound and firm. A similar play on the word good was made in 1.3.12-17 when Shylock says to Bassanio, Antonio is a good man—not meaning that he is a man who is good (i.e., who has a good character) but a man who is sufficient (good to cover the loan).

5. Why, and for what purpose, does Shylock tell Antonio that he has sworn an oath? What does this accomplish for Shylock? [See Additional Notes, 3.3.5]

6. shall: a) must, b) will

7. 〈Thou naughty jailer, thou that art so fond 〉 To come abroad with him at his request.

naughty: unfit, no good, corrupt, foolish
to come abroad: to walk outside the jail, in the street

[See Additional Notes, 3.3.10]
—Antonio
I pray thee, hear me speak.

—Shylock
I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak.
I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more.  / and not your pleading words
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool, 8
To shake my head, relent, and sigh, and yield  / so meekly, // moan
To Christian meddlers. Stay there, follow not. 9 {intercessors}
I'll have no speaking—I will have my bond. 10

Exit Shylock

—Salanio 11
It is the most impenetrable dog  cur
That ever kept  stayed
with men. 12

—Antonio  Let him alone.
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers. 13 / feckless / useless
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:  o
I know the reason why he seeks my life
He would loan out money, then as forfeit,  / Men would be forced to give up all their goods.
He would take everything a man possessed.
Such men would come to me and moan their fate,  o
And I, to free them, loaned them money, gratis. } 15 17 18

8. dull-eyed fool: one who cannot see clearly; one who has the wool pulled over his eyes; one who is hoodwinked; one who is easily deceived
9. {To Christian intercessors. Follow not} / To interfering Christians. Follow not.
   The term interfering resonates with God-fearing.
10. In this short scene, Shylock bids Antonio to speak not four times; and he speaks the words, my bond, six times.
11. The characters of Salanio and Salarino are virtually the same, like two voices of one character; as such, their lines are usually interchangeable. On closer examination, however, we see that Salanio is often given lines that are more forceful and philosophical in nature than those of Salarino: in 1.1 he waxes philosophical; in 2.4 he disagrees with the plan to steal Jessica, and here he expresses outright loathing. Salarino and Salanio come as a pair and often play the role of dual sounding-boards that allow the central characters to express their thoughts. In this line Salanio is uncharacteristically forceful (and expresses a definite opinion). His words resemble those spoken by Salerio in the previous scene: ‘Never did I know | A creature that did bear the shape of a man | So keen and greedy to confound a man.’ [3.2.272-74]
12. {That ever kept with men: a) that every kept the company of men, b) that ever appeared as a man
13. {I'll follow him no more with these bootless prayers.} / I'll follow not with prayers that go nowhere / I’ll follow not with such meaningless pleas / I’ll follow not with stale and feckless prayers
15. / And I, compelled, would loan them money, gratis | To free them from his brutal forfeitures
17. The original passage (now replaced by four lines) reads as follows:
   [I oft delivered from his forfeitures | Many that have at times made moan to me]
18. A more confessional Antonio might add: {Moreover, I have oft-times cursed the man | Railing his presence at the Rialto, | Spitting upon his face each time I passed.} [See Additional Notes, 3.3.23]
Therefore he hates me. / That’s why / ‘Tis why

—Salarino I am sure the Duke Will never grant this forfeiture to hold. / not allow

—Antonio The Duke cannot deny the course of law. / refuse / force > forward movement For the commercial rights that traders have With us in Venice—if it be denied— / if ‘tis not upheld Will much impeach the justice of the state, / impugn / impair And such will harm the city, which is port Of trade to every nation. Therefore, go.

These griefs and losses have so bated me / weakened That when my bloody bondsman calls tomorrow I’ll barely have a pound of flesh to spare. / I will not have Well Jailer, on. Pray God Bassanio come / I pray / Pray good To see me pay his debt, and then I care not. / I’m content

Exeunt

19. Antonio is recounting the many times that men would borrow money from Shylock, under a contract which they likely did not understand, and which served as a kind of entrapment; the contract contained the condition that if they could not pay amounted to the loss of all their goods and property. When men were caught in this predicament they would come and bemoan their fate to Antonio who, out of Christian charity, would loan them money, gratis, so that they could pay off the loan and avoid the ruinous forfeiture. Thus Antonio’s practice of loaning out money gratis ‘robbed’ Shylock of all the extra profit he was eager to extract from his victims. This is likely the primary cause of Shylock’s anger and not so much that Antonio ―lends out money gratis and brings down | The rate of usance here with us in Venice.” [1.3.44-45] 20. / Will cast fair doubt on our good claim to justice / Will strip the state of all its claim to justice
21. bated: abated, reduced, diminished, enfeebled; implying a lose of weight.
{These griefs and losses have so bated me | That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh | Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.}
24. / Yet one more time before I pay his debt.
25. These two lines found in the original—which contain a death-defying plea to see Bassanio one more time—seem misplaced and over-the-top but consistent with Antonio’s obsession with Bassanio. Here, his desire to see Bassanio surpasses even his concern for life. This overweening sentiment weakens Antonio’s character and even suggests some kind of compulsive pathology.
Belmont. Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthazar, Portia’s servant

—Lorenzo

Although I pause to speak it in your presence, / Madam, though I’m not want offer praise
You show a true and noble understanding / {You have a noble and true conceit}
Of godlike friendship, which appears most strongly / {amity} // so fully
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honor, / favor
How true a gentleman you deem to help, / {send relief}
How dear he’s held within thine husband’s heart / placed in / placed within
I know you would be prouder of this work / {works} / deeds
Than from the customary acts of kindness / usual / common
That your good nature moves you to perform. / Your godly nature

1. At this point Portia has decided to go to Venice and intervene on Antonio’s behalf. But upon what information has she come to make this decision? Initially she thought that her tens of thousands of ducats would be enough to save Antonio despite Jessica’s statement, ‘That he would rather have Antonio’s flesh | Than twenty times the value of the sum.’ [3.2.284-85]. However, something has since changed her mind and now she believes that neither her money nor the justice system of Venice nor Bassanio’s wit would be sufficient to save Antonio, so she concludes that she must go to Venice and intervene. This change in Portia’s opinion (and course of action) could only have come about as a result of her continued conversation with Jessica. We are not clear on how Portia came to conclude that only her legal intervention could help Antonio especially since she had no legal training, no knowledge of Venetian law, nor was she familiar with the specifics of the case. We are also not clear as to how she knew that her cousin, Bellario, had been summoned by the Duke to rule on the case—and was too sick to do so—unless she had received some kind of communication from Bellario.

To indicate this continuing conversation between Portia and Jessica (which began in 3.2) the two could be seen entering the scene together (ahead of the others), in conversation. [See Additional Notes, 3.4.0]

2. The sense may be that it is impolite to praise a person in his/her own presence—as this might cause embarrassment (to those who would be modest) or self-aggrandizement (to those inclined in this direction).

3. {Madam, although I speak it in your presence} / Madam, I pause to say it is your presence, | Yet you show true and noble understanding
4. {But if you knew to whom you show this honor} / But if you knew the one whom you thus honor
5. {How dear a lover of my lord your husband} / How dear he’s placed in your husband’s heart
6. / You’d be more honored by this virtuous work / kindly act / generous deed
7. / Than from the custom’ry displays of kindness
8. / Your gen’rous nature moves you to perform / Than your good heart obliges you to enact
9. / Than customary bounty can enforce you / Than from obliged acts of charity

customary: usual, regular, standard
bounty: goodness, benevolence, generosity, overflowing kindness, etc.
enforce you: prompt, impel, incline you; make you feel

Herein, the original line has been expanded into two lines. The sense here is that the act of kindness Portia is performing (in helping Antonio) would be more pleasing to her than from the usual and regular acts of kindness that she, out of the goodness of her heart, is wont to perform. This action goes above and beyond the normal generosity (the customary bounty) of her usual charitable acts.

Various editors interpret this line as follows: ‘Than your wonted generosity make you feel’ (Cam); ‘Than ordinary acts of kindness allow you to feel’ (Appl); ‘Than ordinary acts of kindness can incline you to be’ (Ar); ‘Than your usual acts of benevolence make you perform’ (Ox).

13
—Portia

I never praised myself\(^{10}\) for doing good,\(^{10}\)
And\(^{10}\) shall not now; for in companions\(^{10}\)—
Who do converse and pass\(^{10}\) their time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal\(^{11}\) yoke of love—
There must be needs a like proportion\(^{12}\)
Of character,\(^{12}\) of manners, and of spirit,\(^{13}\)
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the dearest comrade\(^{14}\) of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed\(^{15}\)
In rescuing\(^{15}\) the semblance\(^{15}\) of my soul
From out the state\(^{15}\) of hellish cruelty.
This comes too near the\(^{16}\) praising of myself
Therefore, no more of it. Hear\(^{17}\) other things:
Lorenzo, I commit into\(^{17}\) your hands,
The oversight\(^{17}\) and\(^{17}\) manage of my house
Until my lord’s return. For mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord’s\(^{19}\) return.
There is a monastery two miles off,

\(^{10}\) {I never did repent\(^{10}\) for doing good} / regret / seek praise
\(^{11}\) / I ne’er did pride myself for doing good
\(^{12}\) / There must be needs a likeness of manner / Must share an inclination of like manner
\(^{13}\) / . . . a like proportion | Characteristics, manner, and of spirit,
\(^{14}\) / . . . a like proportion | Of character, sentiment, and of spirit
\(^{15}\) / From this affront
\(^{16}\) / This near approaches self-praise and conceit
\(^{17}\) / The running and management of my house / The management and care of my estate
\(^{18}\) / lord
\(^{19}\) / a monastery two miles off: This suggests that Belmont is an island, which is close enough to the mainland to be connected by a bridge, or that it is a peninsula which appears to be an island as one approaches it from the sea. Lines 3.4.81-84 (where Portia indicates a 20 miles journey by coach, to Padua) and the arrival of other characters, by foot, also suggests that Belmont is connected to the mainland.
And there we will abide. I do ask of you, Not to deny this sudden imposition, The which my love and some necessity Now lays upon you.

—Lorenzo Madam, with all my heart I shall obey you in all fair commands.

—Portia My people do already know my mind And will acknowledge you and Jessica In place of Lord Bassanio and myself. So fare you well till we shall meet again.

—Lorenzo Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you! My people do already know my mind And will acknowledge you and Jessica In place of Lord Bassanio and myself. So fare you well till we shall meet again.

—Portia I thank you for your wish, and am well-pleased To wish the same for you. Fare you well, Jessica.

Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo

Now, Balthazar, As I have ever found thee true and honest, So let me find thee still. Take this same letter, And use thou all thy acumen and skill In speed to Padua. See thou render this Into the hands of my cousin, Bellario.

20. {Not to deny this imposition} / Not to deny this imposing request
21. Portia’s farewell is directed to Jessica alone. The most likely scenario is that Portia is closer to Jessica, and perhaps face-to-face with Jessica, holding her at elbow’s length, and mentions her name to indicate a more personal farewell. Some productions, feeling the need to have Portia and Jessica alone on stage, have Jessica suddenly running back (as she and Lorenzo are exiting) to bid Portia farewell. Such a staging, however, draws too much attention to itself and is not necessary.
22. Portia uses the name of her servant, Balthazar, when she comes into court dressed as a man
23. {And use thou all th’endeavour of a man} / And use the fullest of thy manly prowess / And use thou all thy gainèd skill and power / And use thou all your manly skill and power
24. Portia’s seeming plan to have Bellario provide her with all the books and garments she needs, as well as a glowing letter of recommendation to appear in Bellario’s stead—is contingent upon: a) her knowing that Bellario had since been requested, by the Duke, to oversee this matter in Venice, b) that Bellario was too ill to comply, and c) her confidence in her ability to school herself in all matters of Venician law, in one night (or more), so she could credibly rule over the matter. A more likely plan would be for Portia to visit Bellario, where they could study the case together, and where she could receive expert legal advice. Portia making such a journey to Padua would have taken the same amount of travel time as Balthazar, who was instructed to go to Padua, find Bellario, get the items, and then meet Portia at the ferry landing (on the mainland) where the ferry leaves for Venice. [See Additional Notes, 3.4.55]
Who is a most learned doctor of law. 25
And look what notes and garments he doth give thee, 
Bring them, I pray, with all imagined speed
Unto the landing of the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words
But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee. 26

—Bathazar
Madam, I go with all availing speed.

Exit

—Portia
Come on, Nerissa. I have work in hand
That you have yet to know. We’ll see our husbands
Before they think of us. 27

—Nerissa Shall they see us?

—Portia
They shall, Nerissa, but in such a manner
That they shall think we are but well-equipped
With what we lack. 28 I’ll hold thee any wager. 29
That when we’re both accoutered like young men
I’ll prove the prettier fellow of the two,

25. / One of Italia’s greatest legal minds / Who wields considerable legal skill / Who doth possess the greatest legal mind
26. The plan outlined here is ill-conceived. The more likely plan would be for Portia to send a letter to Bellario, telling him that she would be visiting that night, to go through the books, and to come up with a legal strategy by which she, acting in his stead, could save Antonio. (Bellario, as we learn later in the play, received a letter from the Duke and was already familiar with the matter.) The scenario outlined here would be consistent with logic, efficiency, and with Bellario’s letter to the Duke, where he says: ‘We turned o’er many books together,’ and ‘He is furnished with my opinion.’ [4.1.154-55]

In terms of a production, realism at this point is not crucial and the audience can be relied upon to forgive the gaps in Portia’s plan. Thus, the original lines could be preserved without any appreciable loss. In the original, no meeting takes place: Balthazar is instructed to pick up various books and garments from Bellario, and a) a letter of recommendation to the court (which was read by the Duke 4.1.149-163) b) a letter that outlines a legal opinion which Portia could use to save Antonio) and then meet Portia at the ferry port (traject) where the ferry travels back and forth (‘trades’) between the mainland and Venice.
27. before they think of us: a) before they think about us (being so busy with their own affairs), b) before the think of seeing us, before they think they will be going to see us (i.e., upon their return to Belmont)
28. In other words, they shall think we are men
29. / I’ll bet thee any sum
30. prettier: more pleasing, more gallant, more manly
And wear my dagger with the braver grace, \(^31\) And show the piping voice of some fair yonker / bolder sway / reeded
Not yet a man. \(^32\) And turn two mincing steps Into a manly stride; and speak of brawls
Like a fine, bragging youth; and tell quaint lies
How noble ladies sought my manly love Which when denied they soon fell sick and died. \(^34\)
I could not do them all. \(^35\) Then I’ll repent 
And wish for all that my charm
And I’ll tell twenty of these puny lies, \(^37\)
That men shall swear I had dropped out of school
Aft’ but one year. \(^38\) I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks
Which I will practice. \(^39\)

—Nerissa —Portia
Why, shall we turn to men? \(^40\) Fie, what a question that is! \(^6\) (Shall we turn

31. The brave wearing of one’s dagger (or sword) can be seen as a phallic symbol, and a symbol of one’s manhood.
32. {And between the change of man and boy | With a reed voice}
34. {And speak between the change of man and boy | With a reed voice}
   The change from boy to man; and I will turn
   Two mincing steps into a manly stride,
   And speak of brawls like a fine, bragging youth;
   And tell fantastic lies, how noble ladies
   Did seek my manly love, which when denied
   Led them unto despair and death by heartbreak—
   / They fell to sickness and died of heartbreak
35. {I could not do withal} I could not do anything about it; I could not help it. Pun on the word do— I could not do (make love with) them all, thus suggesting that the woman he could not (or would not) make love with, fell sick and died of heartbreak.
36. {And wish for all that, that I had not killed them} / And wish my darling had not killed them so. / mantrap / beauty / charming
   for all that: for having refused them / for all the actions which were beyond my control / “in spite of that — that I could not prevent their dying.” (Kit)
37. {And twenty of these puny lies I’ll tell} / Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind / More than a year ago. I have in mind
   above a twelvemonth: a) after one year, b) more than a year ago, above a year
39. The lines uttered by Portia show her total embrace of her assumed role as a man, but what she portrays here has nothing to do with the legal garb, and corresponding manner, she is going to show in court. We can see Portia’s willingness to embrace this male role (and come full out of her docile romantic princess mode) as a metaphor for her leaving the fairy-tale world of Belmont and coming into the thick of the Venetian world. In this description, as in 1.2, we see her mocking men and their ways. Portia’s ready acceptance of her male role (even more so than is required) is in full contrast to Jessica’s embarrassment and ‘shame’ at having to simply dress up as a boy—and make a clandestine escape.
40. turn to men: Nerissa surmises that as part of the plan that they will “turn into men” (disguise themselves as men); Portia then plays upon another possible meaning, suggesting that (if she interpreted Nerissa’s meaning in a lewd way) she might think Nerissa is suggesting that they turn to, or approach, men for sexual satisfaction.
To men for carnal pleasure?—I think not!  
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device / of my good plan  
When we are in my coach, which stays / waits  
At the main gate; and therefore haste away.  
For we must journey twenty miles today.  

\textit{Exeunt} 

\begin{flushright}
\underline{\textbf{Additional Notes, 3.4.80}}
\end{flushright}

41. / To men to satisfy our needs? Fie, fie!  
42. / Fie, what a question’s that? / If thou wert near a lewd interpreter! / Fie, what a question’s that? / We shall not turn to men for carnal favors!  
43. \textbf{park gate}: the gate leading beyond the grounds, beyond the estate surrounding the mansion
Shylock is in his house, feeling sad and by his daughter’s betrayal, but also angry. He picks up the bond, glances over it, and tucks it away. He readies his bag. He takes apart the scale and places it into the bag. He picks up a one-pound weight, gauges its weight by lifting it up and down in his hand, and places it in the bag. He goes to his knife collection and ponders which knife to use: he selects the most ominous-looking one, which is thick and pointed, and places the knife in his bag.  

1. Act 3, Scene 5, as found in the original, is a ‘filler’ scene that provides a light-hearted distraction and some psychological time between the previous scene in Belmont and the next scene in Venice. Nothing is advanced in the scene. The quality of this scene (especially the first half) is tiresome and lacking. At the onset of the scene, Launclelet is oddly confronting and harsh; it is unlikely that he would address Jessica in such a cruel manner (as they were friends and allies during his term with Shylock) though some have argued that Jessica, now a Christian, is ‘fair game for Launclelet’s foolery.’ Moreover, Launclelet’s fluency with Homer’s The Odyssey is questionable; his banter with Lorenzo is dull; and the later conversation between Lorenzo and Jessica is uninspired. Due to the weakness of the scene, some scholars have doubted its authenticity and virtually all productions simply delete it.  

2. Previously, when there was an object for its expression (Antonio), we see Shylock able to express his anger and rage; here, in isolation, only sadness penetrates, and, for the first time, he feels a deep and alien sense of loss: “The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now.”  

3. To include an element of black humor, Shylock could be made to test the sharpness of his blade on a tomato (which may or may not be a symbol for the heart). In his first try, he finds the blade to be hopelessly dull and squashes the tomato instead of cleanly cutting it. In frustration, he discards the knife and tries another, with equal lack of success. (Perhaps the knives are dull because Launclelet is no longer there to sharpen them.) Shylock picks up the first knife again, wipes the knife with a towel, and puts it into his bag. (He will sharpen the blade on the sole of his shoe at a later time).  

4. The scene could end here (without any words spoken and without the entrance of Tubal). Ending the scene here would accentuate Shylock’s sense of aloneness. This speechless scene could be used in a production that stays true to the original text—such ‘trueness’ allows for additional staging (and deletions of text) but does not tolerate the addition of any new dialogue. The general rule allows for some archaic words to be modernized and for a character to say the name of another characters, even if that name does not appear in the text. (For example, some productions have Shylock call out ‘Jessica, Jessica’ upon his return from Bassanio’s dinner, even though her name—and this direction to call out her name—does not appear in the original text.)
Enter Tubal

—Tubal
Damn you Shylock! How far do you intend to go with this heinous act?

—Shylock
Until the very end. 6

—Tubal
‘Tis a cruel and ungodly course you take. Just take the principal—or double—and be done with it.

—Shylock
Why does Antonio spit on me? Why do Christians despise us? We are not like them—thus, they cannot see us. But now they will see. Now they must look upon the Jew and hear him. I will play this hand till the very end.

—Tubal
What end?

—Shylock
I will torment him as he has tormented me. I will make him feel as he has made me feel. I will teach him something he will not soon forget. They have pleaded with me. They have asked me to alter my course. It is now I who cannot hear them. Antonio, the Duke, and all the magnificoes have pleaded with me but I will not hear them. I need not hear them.

—Tubal
This will only bring a curse upon our nation. It will lead to ruin. I say, stop this madness, take twice the principle and be done with it.

Shylock and Tubal exit in opposite directions

6. A few lines of explanatory dialogue, relating to the oath that Shylock made, could be inserted here. [See Additional Notes, 3.5.02]
ACT FOUR — Scene One

Venice. A court of justice. Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, and others.

—Duke
What, is Antonio here? / Well

—Antonio Ready, so please your grace.1 / I am

—Duke
I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer You’ve // You’ve come against A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch Incapable of pity—void, and empty / and lacking / without From any hint of mercy. [dram]

—Antonio I have heard Your grace hath ta’en / taken great measures to curb / utmost pains His savage course, but since he stands unshaken / rigorous / obdurate / unmoved And, as no lawful means can carry me [that] / since // render / deliver Beyond his envy’s reach, I do oppose / Out of // pit against My patience to his fury, and am armed 5 / braced / ready To suffer, with a quietness of spirit, The very tyranny and rage of his.6 / he portions / he levies

—Duke
Go one, and call the Jew into the court. > Someone go,

—Salerio
He’s ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

Enter Shylock 7

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1. The first three lines of the original play have six iambs (twelve syllables) as opposed to the standard iambic pentameter.
2. void: > a) heartless, b) without Christian grace
3. / taken great measures to curb / utmost pains
5. {My patience to his fury, and am armed} / His fury with my patience; I am braced
6. {The very tyranny and rage of his.} / The very brunt and tyranny of his rage.
7. The stage heading in Q1 reads, Enter Shylocke, yet the speech headings shift—without reason—between Jew and Shy.
Shy (or Jew): [34— I have possessed your grace, 64, 66, 68, 84, 88, 121, 126, 138, 173]  
Shy: [180— On what compulsion must I?, 203, 220, 223, 225, 232, 243]  
Jew (or Jew): [247— Tis very true, O wise and upright judge, 249, 253, 256, 259, 292, 298, 301]  
Jew: [311— Is that the law?]  
Iew: [315— I take this offer then, pay the bond thrice]  
Shy: [332— Give me my principal and let me go, 338, 341, 370, 389, 391, 394] Note: the speech heading of line 394—In christening shalt thou have two Godfathers—attributes the line to Shylock [Shy.] which is clearly in error—the line belongs to Gratiano.
—Duke
Make room, and let him stand before our face. …
Shylock,⁹ the world thinks—and I think so too—
That thou but leadest⁹ this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act⁹ and then, ‘tis thought,
Thou’lt show thy mercy and remorse; (and yet
This ill-conceived⁹ action is e’er) more strangeⁱ⁰
Than is the strangeness of thy feignéd⁹ cruelty. Nov
And where thou now exact’st⁰ the penalty,¹²
Which is a pound of this poor merchant’s flesh,
Thou wilt not only waive⁰ the forfeiture⁰
But, touched with human⁰ gentleness and love,⁰
Forgive a portion⁰ of the principal,⁰
And glance⁰ an eye of pity on his losses¹³
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enough to press a royal merchant down.¹⁴
And such a loss⁰ should pluck a strain of pathos¹⁵
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn⁰ brutes and warriors⁰ never trained¹⁶
In such demeanor that were soft and tender.¹⁷
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

8. > have him stand in such a way that we can clearly see him
9. Though the Duke is partial to Antonio’s plight (as evidenced in the opening lines of the scene) here he is showing
defereence to Shylock (and giving him the opportunity to change his position) by asking others to make room for him and by
calling him by his name.
10. {Thou’lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange⁠}
    / This ill-conceived course is even more strange / And yet this course conceived is e’en more strange / Yet this
    recourse is even more bizarre / Yet such an ill-bred action is e’en more queer
    / That thou wilt show thy mercy and remorse; | Yet such a course is even more bizarre
11. {Than is thy strange apparent cruelty⁠}
    apparent: a) obvious, visible, b) show of, what appears to be
12. / Thou’lt show thy mercy; yet such course is stranger | Than is the strangeness of thy apparent |
    / Yet this conceived course is even more strange | Then is the strangeness of thy apparent |
    / Cruelty. And where you now demand the forfeit,
13. / And looking on his losses with some pity
14. / Enough to press a royal merchant down} / And now do burden a royal merchant
    / It is odd that the Duke is calling for Shylock to take pity on Antonio and forgive some portion of the principal (in light of
    Shylock’s overtly merciless intentions). Having the Duke call on Shylock to forgive the forfeiture (and then have Antonio
    pay him back when he was able) would be more likely an appeal. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.28]
15. / And pluck commiseration of his state
    / Such loss would pluck a strain of pathos, e’en / a requiem of pity / a dirge of remorse
    > And bring about some pity (in your heart) as a result of his (unfortunate) condition
16. / From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained | To offices of tender courtesy |
    Turks: generally classed with Jews, infidels, and heretics—i.e., those in need of redemption
    Tartars: the brutal and bellicose warriors who made up the hordes of Ghengis Khan
17. / From stubborn brutes and vicious fighters ne’er | Trained in demeanor that were soft or tender
—Shylock

I have informed⁰ your grace of my intention,⁰ And by our holy God of Hosts⁰ I’ve sworn ¹⁸ ¹⁹ To have the due⁰ and forfeit of my bond. ²⁰ If you deny it, let disaster fall⁰ Upon your charter and your city’s freedom. ²¹ You’ll ask me why I rather choose to have A pound⁰ of carrión⁰ flesh than to receive Three thousand ducats?  I’ll not answer that But say it is my bent— ²² (The way my nature Has come to fashion me.) Now is it answered? What if my house be troubled with⁰ a rat And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats To have it banned? ²⁰ Well,² are you answered yet?

18. / And by God’s holy army have I sworn / And by our trust in God’s holy army, / righteous
19. (And by our holy Sabaoth have I sworn) Most commentators have transposed the term found in Q1, Sabaoth—which is a reference to Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Hosts or God’s armies—into Sabbath (the holy seventh day). Thus, with this change, Shylock is made to say: And by our holy Sabbath I have sworn. Such a statement makes little sense in this context. It becomes even more problematic, as Shylock swears upon our holy Sabbath (and the commandment of God which demands that a Jew keep the Sabbath holy) in order to break another of God’s commandments: “thou shall not kill.” Hence, Shylock has swore himself into a predicament. What this shows, moreover, is Shylock’s imperfect brand of Judaism and his foul understanding of his own tradition. Here he is making an oath to the God of the Jews as a device to further his own personal and ungodly aims and impose his corrupt will upon the world. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.35]
20. (To have the due and forfeit of my bond) The contract that usurers entered into usually had two parts: a) the amount due, which is the principle of the bond, the amount actually loaned out (plus any interest which accrued), plus b) the forfeit or forfeiture, which is the penalty that must be paid if the amount due is not paid back on time. Usually the forfeit was a person’s land or some other great expense. Here the forfeit is one pound of flesh. Present usury laws in most countries render such contracts illegal (especially between individuals). These include loan contracts that carry an exorbitant interest rate and/or a contract that contains a disproportionately high penalty. For instance, the usury rate in New York is 18%, which means that a loan between individuals cannot carry an interest rate higher than 18%. In New Jersey, the rate is 30%. Hence, contracts that charge an interest rate above a state’s usury rate is illegal. In most states, the loaning party would lose all rights to collect interest on such a loan; in New York, such a contract being illegal, would be null and void and the borrowing party would not be required to pay back any of the money borrowed.
21. / If you deny it, let the consequence | Defame⁰ your charter and your city’s freedom / If you deny it, let all doubt alight | Upon the charter that grants your city | It’s reputation of fair trade and commerce.
22. (But say it is my humour; it is answered?) my humour: my disposition or nature. This refers to the unchanging bent of ones character or disposition that is determined by the balance of the four main humours or fluids of the body—i.e., blood, phlegm, clear or yellow bile [choler], and dark bile. Blood is associated with the liver (and a lack thereof produces cowardice); phlegm with the lungs / brain; yellow bile with the spleen (producing anger or one who is choleric or splenetic); and dark bile with the gall bladder (producing one who has a gall or choler). [See 3.5.58, for Launcelot’s use of the term].
Shylock’s point is that a person cannot give a reason as to why he has a particular dominance of humour (and why he acts in a particular way), as that is simply his nature. Thus, again, with imperfect logic, Shylock is saying that he is really not responsible for his actions, that he cannot change them, that he is prompted by his nature. (This goes against the central Jewish doctrine of man’s free choice). [See Additional Notes, 4.1.42]

The term humour can also refer to one’s whim, one’s wish, one’s liking—and this is the way that most people would hear this line: “why do you want the pound of flesh?” Shylock is asked—and he replies: “it is my humour, it is my whim, it pleases me”—and that is my reason.
Some men are dull and\(^o\) not inclined to eat
Even when served a feast of gaping pig.\[^{24}\]
Some men\(^o\) go mad if they behold a cat;\[^{25}\]
And others, when the bagpipe sings a note,\[^{o}\]
Do wet their pants in fright.\[^{26}\]
Masters of passion,\[^{o}\] sways it\[^{28}\] to the mood\[^{o}\]
Of what it\[^{o}\] likes or loathes.\[^{30}\]
Now, for your answer:
As there is no\(^o\) firm reason to be rendered\[^{o}\]
/ sluggish, 
/ that 
/ sings i’th’ nose \ / plays a tune 
/ For affection 
/ Just as there’s no \ / given 

\[^{24}\] {Some men there are love not a gaping pig}
Refer to someone who is not moved to eat, even when sitting at a feast, where such grand items as a gaping pig—a pig with its mouth held open by an apple—are served. Shylock may be making an oblique reference to himself: he would not eat (i.e., loves not) the feast of the pork which Christians find so desirable.

\[^{25}\] {Some that are mad if they behold a cat} \ The reference is unclear, but suggests the humor of black bile, which commonly refers to melancholy but also to one beset by haunting dreams and ‘vain imaginations.’ Thus, the reference here may refer to a person who is mad in terms of false imaginings and superstition with regard to harmless cats.

\[^{26}\] {And others when the bag-pipe sings i’th’nose} \ / Cannot contain their urine;}
Sings i’th’ nose: sings in the nose: a) sings its sad song through its nose (horn), b) sings with a nasal type voice or sound.
Bagpipes were known to play mournful tunes. Crying tears (from the eyes) would be the natural response of most men, whereas peeing in one’s own pants would not. Here, according to one’s humour, Shylock is describing someone overtaken by fear (so much so that he would pee in his pants out of fright). Perhaps the confusion is intentional on the part of the playwright, suggesting that Shylock knows the basic theory of the humours but is confused as to their correct application. This confusion could be rectified (and Shylock made to appear more apt) by associating the bagpipe with melancholy, rather than fear; thus, by replacing ‘urine’ with ‘weeping,’ the reference would be to a person besieged by sadness (and tears) rather than by fright (and urine). Thus, a more cogent reference to the humours would be: ‘And others when the bagpipe sings i’th’ nose \ / Cannot contain their weeping.

\[^{27}\] {For affection}
\[^{28}\] {Masters of passion, sways it to the mood}
Affection: a) one’s affect; one’s disposition, inherent temperament, or b) affections, such as likes and desires. [See 3.1.55: ‘Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions;’]
\[^{29}\] {Masters of passion} \ / plays a tune
Masters of passion: That which rules over our emotions and feelings (passion). ‘Masters’ could also be seen as a reference to young men, young counterparts of emotions—but this is an unwarranted stretch. Likewise, Masters of passion is often emended to read, Mistress of passion (Oxford, Norton, Applause, Bevington, Kittredge), suggesting that affection (interpreted as desires) is the cohort of (the mistress of) our emotions (passion). Interpreting ‘affection’ to mean ‘desire (as opposed to one’s natural inclination or disposition) is problematic since such and interpretation makes no meaningful connection to the whole of the passage, which is about man’s unchanging nature (or humour). Thus, affection should relate to one’s humour or inherent nature, as opposed to the more tenuous interpretation as ‘desires.’

The phrase, as it appears in Q1, Masters of passion, is problematic and some editors emending it as, Masters of passion (Cambridge), or Masters of love (Folger)—neither of which illumine or clarify the meaning of the text. It is likely that the intended passage was simply: ‘Masters our passion’ which is in keeping with the general idea that our inherent nature or disposition (affection) rules over (masters) our various feelings and emotions (passion).

\[^{30}\] {Tis one’s own nature} \ / does sway our mood \ / To what it likes or loathes
\[^{31}\] {For our own nature} \ / Ruler of passion, ever sways our mood \ / To what it likes or loathes.
\[^{32}\] {and sways it to move} \ / By what it likes or loathes 
\[^{33}\] {and affects our mood} \ / To what it likes or loathes
Why one° cannot endure° a gaping pig 31
Why one° is crazed to see° a harmless cat, 32 33
Why one° who hears the playing° of a bagpipe
Must yield to shame by wetting his own pants, 34
So can I give no reason, more than° to say,°
There is° a lodged° hate and a certain loathing°
I bear Antonio, that I follow° thus°
A losing° suit against him. Are you answered? 36 37

—Bassanio
This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To justify° the current of thy cruelty. 38

—Shylock
I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

—Bassanio
Do all men kill the things they do not love?

—Shylock
Do men not want to kill the things they hate? 39

—Bassanio
A first offense cannot bestow° such hatred. 40

—Shylock
What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

—Antonio

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31. {Why he cannot abide a gaping pig} / cannot endure / cannot stomach
   abide: tolerate, bear, be unaffected by, stand the sight of

32. / Why he is superstitious of a cat  See Note 18 xx.
33. / Why he a harmless, necessary cat
   necessary: useful, needed to perform the function of catching mice
   harmless: refers to an ordinary house cat, as opposed to a ‘harmful’ cat, as might be employed by a witch
34. / Must yield to such inevitable shame | As to offend, himself being offended,
   / Is forced to bear the shame of wetting his | Own pants, offending others as himself.
35. / There is a long-standing hate and loathing
36. / More than a lodged hatred and a certain loathing | I bear Antonio, that I follow thus | A losing suit against him. Are you answered?
   losing suit: an unprofitable action where Shylock gains a worthless pound of flesh as as opposed to the usual monetary gain.
37. / See Additional Notes, 4.1.62
38. / To excuse thy overflowing° cruelty / over-bounding
   / But mere excuse for thy vengeful cruelty° / boundless / flooding / avid / ardent
39. / Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
   / Every man kills the thing that would kill him.° / he does hate.
40. / Every offence is not a hate at first / How can there be such hatred from one offence?
I pray you, think, you argue with a stone.  
You may as well go stand upon the beach 
And bid the tide to bate its usual height; 
You may as well use question with the wolf. 
Why he hath killed the baby lamb with jaws. 
You may as well forbid the mountain pines 
To wag their high tops and to make no noise 
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven; 
You may as well do anything most hard 
As seek to soften that which none is harder— 
His godless heart. Therefore, I do beseech you, 
Make no more offers, use no further means, 
But with all brief and plain efficiency 
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

—Bassanio [to Shylock]
For thy three thousand ducats, here is six.

—Shylock
If every ducat in six thousand ducats 
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat, 
I would not draw them. I would have my bond.

—Duke
How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend’ring none?

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41. {I pray you think, you question with the Jew}  
   the Jew: refers specifically to Shylock, and not to Jews in general, else Antonio would have said, ‘you question with a Jew.’
42. You may as well: Antonio repeats this phrase four times.
43. / And bid the tide to lower its usual height / And bid the high tide not rise with the moon. / And bid the tide abate its rising waters.
44. / Why he hath made the ewe bleake for the lamb / bleat: cry loudly. Q1 has bleake, which is likely an error for bleat.
45. {As see to soften that—than which what’s harder?—} / To try and soften that which is hardest— / To try and soften the hardest thing of all—
46. {His Jewish heart.} / His vacant heart / vacuous heart / faithless heart. / His merciless heart. Thus 
   This line is somewhat out of place for Antonio, as his contention with Shylock has been over usury, yet here is a direct 
   attack against Shylock’s Jewishness. Under the circumstances, where Antonio is about to be killed by this unforgiving 
   enemy, such a slur is not out of place, and may reveal what Antonio believes to the ‘thick-necked’ and unflinching aspect of 
   Shylock’s character. An normal usurer, having been offered three times the principle owed, would have taken the offer.
   Thus, there is something more than mere usurious greed which is entrenching Shylock in the ‘unprofitable course.’ 
   Antonio, unable to fathom Shylock’s alien course of action, is here linking it to his Jewishness, since Antonio can find 
   nothing else.
47. / His unforgiving heart. Thus, I beseech you
48. {But with all brief and plain conveniency} / But with all plain and efficient dispatch
49. Shylock is saying that he would refuse an offer of 36,000 ducats. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.86]
—Shylock

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong? 50

You have among you many a purchased slave 51 / acquired
Which like your donkeys and your dogs and mules
You use in abject and in slavish roles 52 / lowly {parts} / tasks / chores / functions
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you:
‘Let them be free. Marry them to your heirs.
Why sweat them under burdens? Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be seasoned with the same viands.’ You will answer:
‘The slaves are ours.’ So do I answer you: 53
The pound of flesh which I demand of him
Is dearly bought. ‘Tis mine, and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice. 54
I stand5 for judgment. Answer—shall I have it? / wait // justice

—Duke

Upon my power I may dismiss this court, 55 / case
Unless Bellario, a learnéd judge, 56 / a learned doctor / a doctor of law
Whom I have sent for to determine this, 57
Come here today.

50. / What fate should I dread, having done no wrong? / For what mercy should I hope, doing no wrong? / Why hope for mercy, having done no wrong?

Here is the blunder of Shylock’s position—he is doing a great wrong. He is holding to the letter of the law to justify his doing something he knows (by his own conscience and the laws of Judaism) to be wrong. Hence, it is Shylock’s own feeble consciousness (or greed-infested anger) which does not allow him to understand the truth of the law—and this is his undoing. His position is untruthful in every respect and violates the spirit of every law: thus he tries to empower himself by cleaving to the strict letter of the Venetian law—for his own selfish gain—as opposed to upholding the law of human righteousness. Thus, by his own lack of truth, he is undone.

51. / Many among you have a purchased slave.
52. / You burden with despised and slavish means
53. / Be seasoned with the same viands.’ Your answer
   Shall be: ‘The slaves belong to us; (we have
   Purchased them.’) So, I answer you the same:
54. / There is no power in the laws of Venice.
55. / Upon my power I may dismiss this court
   upon my power: by virtue of my power, in accord with my power (as Duke)
   I may dismiss: a) dismiss the case entirely, b) adjourn the case until such time as Bellario appears. The legal proceedings of the play correspond to neither Venetian nor English law of the time.

The Duke states that he has the power to dismiss this case, contrary to the assertions made that the Duke does not have that power, and must follow the strict letter of the law (and thereby honor the contract) [Antonio: 3.4.26-31; Portia: 4.1.215-219]. One of the earliest cases in US law involved individual rights, and it was ruled that the state could not nullify a contract made between individuals—if it did have that power the (as stated in Chief Justice Marshall’s opinion) the very institution and fabric of the economic livelihood of the country would be undermined. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.103]

56. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.105]
57. There is a causality implied here: “I, the Duke, have the power to dismiss this case, unless Bellario comes to determine it.” Hence, if Bellario does not come, the Duke may dismiss the case. Thus, Portia’s arrival on behalf of Bellario—and with Bellario’s glowing recommendation—is the very thing that stalls the Duke and prevents him from dismissing the case. Had Bellario or his emissary not appeared, what would have happened? Would the case have been dismissed? Thus, Portia’s arrival to rule over the proceedings has unwittingly put Antonio’s life in new jeopardy. As such, it becomes increasingly clear that Portia was fully versed in the law and was well aware that she could save Antonio before she dared such a bold intervention.
—Salerio
My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the judge,
New come from Padua.

—Duke
Bring us the letters! Call the messenger!

Exit Salerio

—Bassanio
Good cheer, Antonio! What man, courage yet.
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shall lose for me one drop of blood.

—Antonio
I am a feeble creature of the flock,
Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me.
Hear now Bassanio, you are best employed
To live that you may write my epitaph.

Enter Salerio with Nerissa, dressed as a lawyer’s clerk

—Duke
Come you from Padua, from Bellario?

—Nerissa
From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

She hands him a letter
Shylock sharpens his knife on the sole of his shoe

—Bassanio [to Shylock]
Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

—Shylock
To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

—Gratziano
Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew.

58. / My Lord, there’s waiting outside / My Lord, remains outside
59. / Hold fast man, have courage!
60. wether: weak or castrated ram. From bellwether: a ram with a bell hung round its neck
61. (You cannot be better employed, Bassanio, | Than to live still and write mine epitaph.)
62. sole: Shylock whets his knife on the sole of his shoe or boot
Thou mak’st thy knife keen. But no metal can—
No, not the hoodman’s axe—bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

—Shylock
No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

—Gratiano
O, be thou damned, inexecrable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused!
Thou almost mak’st me waver in my faith,
To hold the same opinion as the Greeks
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men. Thy beastly spirit
Governed a wolf who hanged for human slaughter;
Then from the gallows did his fell soul flee,
And whilst thou lay in thy unhallowed womb,
Infused itself in thee, for thy desires
Are wolvish, blood-thirsty, and ravenous.

—Shylock
Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond
Thou but offend’st thy lungs to speak so loud.
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

—Duke
This letter from Ballario doth commend

63. / Thou makest keen thy knife. No metal can
64. **hangman’s axe**: executioner’s axe. Here the term *hangman’s* is begrudgingly emended with *hoodman’s* or *hooded man’s*, to clarify the reference to an executioner (who is usually hooded) and who employs a sharp axe, rather than to a hangman, who is more likely to be associated with a rope rather than an axe. In an alternative rendering the more precise term, *executioner*—though long-winded—could be used: ‘No, not the ex’cutioner’s sharpest axe | Bear half the keenness of thy sharp envy. | Can nothing get through? Can no prayer piece thee?’ / Not even that of a head-chopper’s axe / Not even the fell axe of a hoodman
65. / To hold the opinion with Pythagoras | To hold a common tenet with the Greeks | To share the same belief as ancient Greeks.
   Gratiano is referring to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding reincarnation and the transmigration of souls (where an animal soul could incarnate in a human body), which is heresy to Christians.
66. / Governed a wolf, who hanged for human slaughter
67. / Did his fell soul fleet
68. / Inhabited a wolf who was but hanged
69. / Vile and unholy womb; for thy desires
   Are wolvish, blood-thirsty, and ravenous.
69. [See Additional Notes: 4.1.137]
70. **repair**: use to good end, put to good use, rectify, set in order
A young and learned scholar to our court.

Where is he?

—Nerissa  He attendeth here, nearby. He is waiting here

To know your answer, whether you’ll admit him.

—Duke

With all my heart. Some three or four of you,

Go give him courteous escort to this place.

Exeunt three or four

Meanwhile, the court shall hear Bellario’s letter:

Exeunt three or four

Meanwhile, the court shall hear Bellario’s letter:

Enter Portia as Balthazar, Doctor of Law, with others

You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes?

And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

---

71. {He attendeth here hard by} / He doth eagerly await / He is eagerly awaiting
72. / With courteous intent, go bring him here.
73. Q1 offers no stage direction here; and since no character is designated to read the letter, most productions simply have the Duke read it. This is certainly acceptable, however, it may be more dramatically apt to have a court official read the letter (which could be Salerio). Had the Duke said, ‘Meantime, I will read Bellario’s letter’ the direction for him to read would be clear.
74. {in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthazar}  In the original, no visitation was made between Portia and Bellario: Portia’s servant was sent to Bellario, who fetched clothes and books, and who then gave them to Portia at the port where the ferry traveled to Venice. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.151]
75. This indicates that Bellario reviewed the matter and furnished Portia with his opinion—as opposed to simply supplying her with the books.
76. [See Additional Note, 4.1.159]
77. {I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.}
78. {I was very ill} / {I am very sick}

arrived: {came}
the case: {the cause} / matter
whose conduct: {whose trial} / evidence of his judgement / your test of him
disclose: {publish} / make known / reveal
worthiness: {commendation}
Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

—Portia
I did⁰ my lord. / I do / I have

—Duke You are welcome. Take your place. Are you acquainted with the grave dispute⁰ That holds this present question⁰ in the court? ⁷⁹ / difference / disagreement / matter / issue

—Portia I am informed thoroughly of the case.⁰ ⁸⁰ / informed with respect to the cause Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew? ⁸¹

—Duke Antonio and old Shylock, both step forward.⁰ ⁸² / stand forth.

—Portia Is your name Shylock?

—Shylock Shylock is my name.

—Portia Of a strange nature is the suit you follow Yet in such ruling,⁰ the Venetian law Cannot impugn⁰ you as you do proceed. ⁸⁴ / oppose [to Antonio]

79. / That occupies the question now in court?
80. Portia, being well-informed as to the present matter (and the law governing it), suggests that she met with Bellario, rather than thoroughly educating herself in all nuance of Venetian law. Yet, such a meeting is not indicated in the original. Two possibilities thus exist: a) that Balthazar reviewed the matter and took the time to write out an opinion for Portia, along with his letter of recommendation to the Duke, or b) Portia changed her plans midstream and decided it would be best to visit Balthazar in person, in Padua.
81. Although Portia is likely to know which is Antonio and which is Shylock—through a difference in appearance and dress—with this opening question she demonstrates the true impartial qualities of a judge and makes it known that she is entering into the case without any assumptions, prejudices, or preconceptions. Questioning even that which is most obvious testifies to her impartiality. In some productions the courtroom is crowded and she has reason to ask this question. In other productions the difference in appearance between Antonio and Shylock is not so obvious; or the difference is obvious and Portia, already knowing the answer, still asks the question. In some productions, Shylock gives a mocking glance at Portia when she asks this question whose answer is obvious.
82. It is possible, that this could be read as part of a stage direction, rather than a directive from the Duke. It also may shed some light on Portia’s question: “Which is the merchant here, and which is the Jew?” If the two were already standing forward, alone, she may not ask this question as the answer was obvious. However, if Shylock were among his people, and Antonio among his people, she would not know which was the merchant and which was the Jew. They would both have to step forward in order for her to know which was the Jew, in question, and which was the merchant, in question.
84. / Cannot oppose the course you choose to follow

In terms of reasoning, what possible interest could Portia have in preserving Venetian law over the life of her husband’s dear friend? And why did she intervene in the first place?—to uphold Venetian law or bend the law to save Antonio? Surely, at this point, her best course would be to seek to have the case dismissed, or call on the Duke to dismiss it (as he stated he had the power to do). Her defense of the Venetian law—which bodes ill against Antonio’s position—must be seen as part of her overall stratagem. Portia to play this card we must assume that she is in total control of the case (and its outcome) from the onset. In other words, she is well aware of the law by which she can stop Shylock, at any time, if he is not willing to drop the case against Antonio.
You stand within his danger, do you not?

—Antonio
Ay, so he says.

—Portia Do you confess the bond?

—Antonio I do.

—Portia Then must the Jew be merciful.

—Shylock On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

—Portia
The quality of mercy is not strained
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the earth below. It is twice blessed:
It blesseth him who gives and him who gets.
’Tis mightiest when rendered by the mighty
(Upon the weak and helpless.)
It enobles
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,

85. within his danger: within his power to harm you; within the reaches of his bond and the danger of its consequence; within harm’s way.

86. strained: forced, compelled. Shylock asks “On what compulsion must I be merciful?” and Portia answers this by saying that the quality of mercy is not something that must be compelled, or forced, but something that comes as a natural expression of the heart. It dropeth like rain; it does not have to be ‘squeezed’ out of a person.

87. (It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.) / Blessing the one who gives and who receives

that takes: the imagery of him that takes is somewhat inferior to that him who receives, as the former suggest a willful action rather than a passive reception. Taking thus implies the acquisition of some benefit which comes from personal action (without the need of a giver), whereas receiving implies a benefit bestowed by a giver. One need not take rain, it falls from the sky freely—all one need do is receive it.

88. /’Tis mightiest in the mighty, when rendered

90. (To those who’re helpless and weak.) / powerless

91. (It becomes | the throned monarch better than his crown.)

92. temporal: worldly, material, assigned; temporary and passing

Portia is suggesting that the king’s power is temporal, whereas the quality of mercy, which reflects God’s attributes, is ever-lasting—it is above this sceptered sway. “By the greatest fate a powerful king may rule the earth for a hundred years; but through the power of love, he may rule the earth forever.” (Adopted from the Tao Te Ching)
The attribute to awe and majesty That which commandeth
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings. Which brings about
But mercy is above this sceptered sway. It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute of God himself. To
And earthly power shares kinship with God / is akin to God
When mercy tempers justice. Therefore, Jew, [seasons] placates
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
That in the course of justice none of us Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render The deeds of mercy.
I have spoken thus To mitigate thy rig'rous plea, for justice, Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

93. attribute to: a) the claim or entitlement to; b) having the attributes, quality, or character of
That which commandeth to awe and majesty,
The sanctioned rights
That which confers to him reverence and awe
94. / Wherein he rules the state with fear and dread
Whereby the people are governed by fear
95. / And earthly power doth then show likest God's
96. / And earthly power holds (/shows) the most kinship
With God's, when justice is balanced (/seasoned) with mercy.
97. / And earthly power doth then show likest God's | When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
The use of the term 'Jew,' in this instance, is somewhat amiss—along with the entire appeal, which involves sentiments relating to kingly power, awe, and majesty rather than a Jew who only feels oppression (at the hands of more powerful Christians). Portia, however, is addressing the position of power which Shylock now hold over Antonio (likening it to the power which a king has over his subjects) and, at the same time, she is revealing the poverty of that power (which a king gets by virtue of his crown and which Shylock has obtained through the legal backing of his bond) when compared to a position in kinship with God, a position of mercy.
98. This is an oblique reference to the doctrine of original sin and the notion that it is impossible to attain salvation through one's work alone (i.e. without the grace of God).
99. / Would // see / find
100. / staunch appeal / stern appeal
101. / froward / headstrong / wilful
102. {To mitigate the justice of thy plea}

The Lord's Prayer: ‘Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.’
My deeds upon my head! my deeds upon my head! Let my own deeds be upon my head; let me bear the consequence (or divine retribution) of my own deeds (which I need not fear because I am blameless). Not true. Shylock mistakenly believes his action to be sinless (because, in his mind, he is following some law); thus he need not fear retribution nor seek mercy (which pertains to someone who has sinned). Portia says that mercy falls like gentle rain from heaven: here Shylock is dismissing her plea and says, ‘I don’t care about heaven’s mercy falling upon me like rain, let my own deeds fall upon my head.’ Shylock, blinded by hatred, and strictly devoted to the letter of the written law, is unable to see the divine discord of his own actions. Rather than craving that which God desires, Shylock craves the law which will grant him the unjust penalty and forfeit of his bond.

The penalty and forfeit of my bond > that part of the bond (above and beyond the principal and interest) which is due if the full sums borrowed are not paid back in time. In this case, the penalty Shylock is demanding—which is owed according to the terms of the bond—is a pound of Antonio’s flesh.

1. Let my own deeds now fall upon my head! I crave the law, the forfeit of my bond.

To reiterate the reason for Shylock’s rage against Antonio, the following lines could be added:

Additional lines (A):

Shy: Here, now, we see the face of good Antonio.
  Yes good, but good to whom? Not me. Not mine. / Showing his virtue like a stained-glass window;
  For I have only felt the broken shards
  Of his abuse, his cruelty ripped upon
  My humanness and rend my good standing

Additional lines (B):

Shy: How is a man to feel when he is treated
  With malice and contempt? With years of insult?
  With spitting, cursing, torment, and abuse—
  As this man, lacking goodness, treated me?
  Is there no law in your book against that?


Shy: Then where is it written—

In a same place where one can find your mercy?

106. My deeds upon my head!: Let my own deeds be upon my head; let me bear the consequence (or divine retribution) of my own deeds (which I need not fear because I am blameless). Not true. Shylock mistakenly believes his action to be sinless (because, in his mind, he is following some law); thus he need not fear retribution nor seek mercy (which pertains to someone who has sinned). Portia says that mercy falls like gentle rain from heaven: here Shylock is dismissing her plea and says, ‘I don’t care about heaven’s mercy falling upon me like rain, let my own deeds fall upon my head.’ Shylock, blinded by hatred, and strictly devoted to the letter of the written law, is unable to see the divine discord of his own actions. Rather than craving that which God desires, Shylock craves the law which will grant him the unjust penalty and forfeit of his bond.

107. the penalty and forfeit of my bond > that part of the bond (above and beyond the principal and interest) which is due if the full sums borrowed are not paid back in time. In this case, the penalty Shylock is demanding—which is owed according to the terms of the bond—is a pound of Antonio’s flesh.

108. / Let my own deeds now fall upon my head! I crave the law, the forfeit of my bond.

109. To reiterate the reason for Shylock’s rage against Antonio, the following lines could be added:

Additional lines (A):

Shy: Here, now, we see the face of good Antonio.
  Yes good, but good to whom? Not me. Not mine. / Showing his virtue like a stained-glass window;
  For I have only felt the broken shards
  Of his abuse, his cruelty ripped upon
  My humanness and rend my good standing

Additional lines (B):

Shy: How is a man to feel when he is treated
  With malice and contempt? With years of insult?
  With spitting, cursing, torment, and abuse—
  As this man, lacking goodness, treated me?
  Is there no law in your book against that?


Shy: Then where is it written—

In a same place where one can find your mercy?

110. Later in the scene [224, 231] Portia states that an offer of thrice the sum has been made, whereas here, in Q1 [207] Bassanio only offers twice the sum. Either Portia is mistaken in her recall, she intentionally ups the offer, or Bassanio offered thrice the sum (and twice is a typo). The discrepancy is rectified by having Bassanio offer thrice the sum and Portia referring to this same amount.

111. / That malice overthrows truth. I beseech you / vanquishes / overwhelms / overturns

112. / And curb this devil of his hellish will

113. / Do but a little wrong, and curb this devil / From the cruel execution of his will.
—Portia
It must not be. There is no power in Venice / cannot
That can alter an established decree. / cannot
'Twill be recorded as a precedent, / reverse / turn back / o'erturn
And many an error, by the same example, / 'Twill then be counted
Will rush into the state. It cannot be. / many errors // as herein applied

—Shylock
A Daniel come to judgment, yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

—Portia
I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

—Shylock [eagerly handing it over]
Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

—Portia [accepting the document but not yet reading it]
Shylock, there's thrice the money offered thee. / must not

—Shylock
An oath, an oath. I have an oath in heaven! / I've made
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?—
No, not for Venice.

—Portia [looking over the bond] Why, this bond is forfeit, / Yes
And lawfully, by this, the Jew may claim

115. [Can alter a decree established]
116. Such a defense of Venetian law—over the direct concerns of her husband, and also over what is morally right, merciful, and fair—is amiss. Why is Portia (who took so many measures to impersonate a doctor of law and intervene on behalf of Antonio) now taking pains to preserve precedent in Venetian law? What is she offering here that a normal Venetian judge could not offer?—if not a straight-forward reading of the law. We must assume, by this strange course, that Portia is 'playing' this hand to the end, and that even before entering the court she was aware of holding a trump card, and being able to stopping Shylock at any time. See footnote for line 176. [See Additional Note, 4.1.219]
117. Shylock: Portia is still calling him by first name.
118. thrice: In Q1, Bassanio offers twice the sum [207]. This amount was emended to read thrice the sum, in order to align it with Portia's statement: Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee. [224] If Bassanio only offered twice the sum then here, it seems, that Portia is upping the ante, as Shylock has already refused twice the sum. If she offered the same sum, already refused, it would not be as effective a plea as offering a higher amount. It is possible, as some have speculated, that either Shakespeare (or Portia) forgot that twice was offered, and herein stated thrice, in error (with no objection from Bassanio). More likely, the error slipped in as a result of a copyist's error.
119. To remind the audience that Shylock's oath refers to exacting the forfeit of his bond—a reminder which no mature audience would need—the following line, could be added: 'I swore to have the forfeit of my bond.'
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant’s heart. [to Shylock] Be merciful,
Take thrice thy money. Bid me tear the bond.

—Shylock
When it is paid according to the tenor.\(^\circ\) {tenure} / terms
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your most learned opinion\(^\circ\) {exposition} / interpretation
Has been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof\(^\circ\) you are a well-deserving\(^\circ\) pillar, /Of which // unwavering / unaltering
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man\(^{120}\)
To alter me. I stay here on\(^\circ\) my bond. / stand fast to

—Antonio
Most heartily, do I beseech the court
To give the judgment.

—Portia Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

—Shylock
O noble judge! O excellent young man!

\(\langle The\ Duke\ bids\ Portia\ to\ approach\ him;\ they\ talk\ aside.\rangle\)\(^{121}\)

—Portia\(^{122}\)
For the intent and purpose of the law
Grants\(^\circ\) full enforcement of\(^\circ\) the forfeiture\(^\circ\)\(^{123}\) /Gives / Bears // penalty
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

—Shylock
‘Tis very true, O wise and upright\(^\circ\) judge! righteous
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

---

\(^{120}\) However, as we soon discover, there is power in the tongue of a woman!

\(^{121}\) There is a break in rhythm here [line 243], which could suggest some type of staged action and a pause in the dialogue. In this exchange between Portia and Shylock the next three lines [244-46] are essentially vacuous and a bland recap of what we’ve already heard, again suggesting a possible break in the dialogue. Or it could be that Portia is repeating words while she is thinking about something she had just discussed with the Duke.

In a likely staging, the Duke could call Portia over after line 243. The unheard conversation between Portia and the Duke might suggest that the Duke is not convinced about Portia’s course of action. Thus we could infer that Portia is reassuring the Duke (perhaps with a subtle hand motion) that she is in total control and that she has no intention of letting Shylock carry out the deed as he intends. Thus, after her conversation with the Duke, Portia returns and repeats what has already been stated (with lines 244-46) as a way to regain her bearings and continue the conversation where she left off. A second aside between the Duke and Portia could also be called after line 301 (where Shylock says, ‘Come, prepare!’) suggesting that the Duke feels this has gone on far enough, and that now he wants closure.

\(^{122}\) As stated in the previous note, the following five lines are somewhat repetitive and could be deleted.

\(^{123}\) [Hath full relation to the penalty] / Fully supports the given penalty / Gives full upholding to the penalty / Deems to fulfill the terms of penalty
—Portia [to Antonio]
Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

—Shylock
Ah, his breast.
So says the bond; doth it not, noble judge?
‘Nearest his heart’—those are the very words.

—Portia
‘Tis so. Are scales\(^\circ\) here to weigh the flesh? {balance}

—Shylock [opening a bag to reveal them]
I have them ready. (They are in my bag.)

—Portia
Have you\(^\circ\) a surgeon, Shylock,\(^{124}\) on your charge,\(^{125}\) Is there // hired / paid for by you
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death?

—Shylock [looks at the bond]
Is it so nominated in\(^\circ\) the bond?\(^{126}\) / specified within

—Portia
It is not so expressed, but what of that\(^\circ\)? / it
‘Twere good you do so much out of compassion\(^{127}\) \(^{128}\) [for charity]

—Shylock
I cannot find it; ‘tis not in the bond.\(^{129}\)

—Portia
You, merchant,\(^{130}\) have you anything to say?

---

124. The calling of Shylock by his name, as opposed to ‘Jew,’ at this stage in the game is somewhat telling. Portia is still appealing to him on a personal level, giving him yet another opportunity to veer from his intended course and show mercy—though at this point, by all accounts, she is now disgusted with Shylock’s intransient and unmerciful position.

125. {Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge.} have by: have you come by; have you hired / And have you, Shylock, paid for a surgeon / And have you, Shylock, here employed a surgeon? / Have you employed a surgeon, on your charge / Have you a surgeon, hired at your expense? / Is there that condition listed in the bond? / Is that mentioned in the terms of the bond? / Is that specified in the written bond? / It is an act of charity and goodness. / It is a righteous action of compassion.

127. Portia, seeing the futility of trying to reason with Shylock—and his showing not one iota of compassion or mercy—now shifts her position and seeks to actuate her course of action against Shylock. She has given him every chance to be merciful and charitable—actions that are in line with higher principles—all of which he refused.

129. Here there is a shift in Portia’s attitude towards Shylock; rather than continuing to address him (and continuing to argue with him) she shifts her attention and focus away from him. Perhaps her sensitivity now gives in to disgust at what appears to a singular lack of charity and humanity—a sentiment rather alien and abhorrent to Portia. See previous note.

130. Portia calls Shylock by name on many occasions, but herein refers to Antonio impersonally as, ‘you, merchant.’ After the turning point [259]—when Portia gives up all hope to try and dissuade Shylock from his inhumane course—she never again refers to him by name, but only as the ‘Jew.’ During the trial, Portia refers to Antonio as ‘the merchant,’ [260, 296]; after Shylock is thwarted, she calls him by his proper name [369, 374].
—Antonio

But little. I am braced° and well-prepared
Give me your hand Bassanio, fare you well.
Grieve not that I am fall’n to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her way°
To let the wretched° man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow° eye and wrinkled brow
His final years of pain and° poverty—
But from the misery of this ling’ring penance
Doth she, ⟨with bitter° kindness,⟩ now release me.¹³¹ ¹³²
Commend me to you honourable wife.
Tell her the story° of Antonio’s end.
Say how I loved you, even at my death.°
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once been loved.¹³⁴
Regret but you° that you shall lose your friend;
And he regrets° not that he pays your debt:
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I’ll pay it instantly° with all my heart.° ¹³⁶

—Bassanio

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Who° is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world
Are not with me more dear than is° thy life.¹³⁷
I would give° all, ay, sacrifice them all,
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

—Portia [aside]

Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by° to hear you make the offer. / Were she nearby

¹³¹. / I am, by Fortune’s kindness, now released. / I am, by her sweet kindness so delivered.
¹³². To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow . . .
   a) An age of poverty— and now she saves me from the ling’ring penance of such misery.
   b) Long years of aging pain and poverty / The misery from which I am now released.
   c) Long years of poverty, the ling’ring penance / Of which she now so kindly cuts from me.
   d) His final years of pain and poverty: ’Tis from the misery of this lingering penance, which I am so kindly released.
(Δelivered).
¹³⁴. Whether Bassanio had not once a love
   / Whether Bassanio was not truly loved. / Whether or not Bassanio had been loved.
¹³⁵. Have one regret— / Hold one regret— / Regret alone
¹³⁶. with all my heart: wholeheartedly; with total embrace; implies something done with total love and willingness. Here Antonio is saying, ‘I’ll pay your debts most willingly, without regret, with love, and wholeheartedly.’
   / I will most willingly give up my life / I will—with all my heart—give up my life
¹³⁷. Are not with me esteemed above thy life / Are not so dear to me as is thy life / I do not hold more dearly than thy life
—Gratziano
I have a wife whom, I declare, I love. \{protest\}
I wish she were in heaven, so she could \{would\}
Entreat some power to change this dogged Jew. \{currish\}  

—Nerissa [aside]
‘Tis well you offer it behind her back,
The wish would make else an unquiet house. \{unquiet\}

—Shylock
These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter—
I’d prefer any kin of Barrabas \{stock\}
Had been her husband rather than a Christian. \{would be / To be\}
We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence. \{squander / waste our\}

—Portia
A pound of that same merchant’s flesh is thine,
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

—Shylock
Most rightful judge! \{righteous > correct in judgement\}

—Portia
And you must cut this flesh from off his breast,
The law allows it and the court awards it.

138. Gratziano’s plea is a comic relief—his friendly love for Antonio would not give him cause to sacrifice his wife on Antonio’s behalf. His comment serves to support the theme of his pairing with Bassanio, a theme that was seen earlier (in the mutual wedding) and which we will see later (with the misplacement of rings). Gratziano’s plea, though misplaced, also gives Shylock some fodder upon which to comment.

139. unquiet: a) noisy—from all the screaming; b) restless, anxious, troubled
Else the wish ‘twould make an unquiet house. Else such a wish would make a troubled house

140. Shylock still claims that he has a daughter. He has not disowned her, nor stated, ‘she is dead to me’—which would usually be the case where a daughter married a Christian (and betrayed her father in doing so).

141. Barrabas: a thief chosen to be released over Jesus. Shylock (after seeing the way that Christians treat their wives) is saying that he would rather have the lowest of all Jews (a thief) marry his daughter rather than a Christian (even the highest among Christians), or b) a Christian thief such as Lorenzo.

142. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.294]

143. / I pray, proceed to sentence
—Shylock
Most learnèd judge! A sentence! [To Antonio] Come, prepare!

Antonio is strapped to a chair.
Shylock prepares his blade. ⟨Shylock approaches Antonio.⟩

—Portia
Tarry a little—there is something else.⁰
This bond doth give thee here no drop of blood:
The words expressly are, ‘a pound of flesh.’
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, forfeited⁰
Unto the state of Venice.

—Gratziano
O upright judge!

144. This line is somewhat haunting in that Shylock is addressing Antonio right before he is about to kill him. A more haunting line would be one where Shylock calls Antonio by name, in a familiar tone, such as: ‘A learnèd judge. Come, Antonio, prepare.’

145. No stage direction follows this line in Q1. It reads:

Jew. Most learned Judge, a sentence, come prepare.
Por. Tarry a little, there is some thing else,
this bond doth give thee heere no iote of blood,
the words expresly are a pound of flesh:

For dramatic effect, most productions add some kind of staging after Shylock’s says, ‘Come, prepare.’ We typically see Shylock take out his knife and approach Antonio, sometimes hesitating a bit to regroup, then pulling back his blade, about to cut into Antonio, when Portia suddenly shouts out ‘Tarry a little!’—which brings a halt to Shylock’s immanent action. It is unlikely that the words, tarry a little, were intended to stop an action, as they are far too casual and lack all sense of urgency. The charge of stop or wait might be more apt a command to stop or stay an immanent action, or some other cue. For the possible insertion of some added lines here, see: Additional Notes, 4.1.300 Also see Additional Notes, 4.1.301a and 4.1.301b

148. There is an energetic break after line 301 [Most learnèd judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!]. During this pause Portia could be summoned over to confer with the Duke. As stated in footnote 121, Portia could initially be summoned to talk with the Duke after line 242, and then again after line 301.

149. tarry a little: hold on, wait a moment, hang around a little while longer
This line could come after a) a revelation, when Portia suddenly finds something in the books, such as a new way to read the letter of the law, which then changes the vector of the case (not likely) or b) Portia is ready to bring up a legal argument (which she knew about all along) which thwarts Shylock’s intended course of action.

Many productions have Portia urgently yell out this line in order to stop Shylock right before he is about to stab his knife into Antonio. But this never works and always seems anticlimactic. Such a casual, lingering line would best be delivered after Shylock has been thwarted. If Portia intended to stop Shylock’s action, verbally, she would be more likely to yell out something like “Stop!” rather than “Tarry a little.” A possible staging would be for Portia to stop Shylock’s action by making some sudden and loud noise (which could be accomplished by hitting a hard object on the table, slamming down a book, or throwing down a bag of ducats, etc.) then delivering this casual line. However, there is remains a more preferred way stage this part of the scene. For details, please contact the author at JonathanStar.com). [See Additional Notes, 4.1.302]
Hear Jew. O learnèd judge!  

—Shylock
Is that the law?  

—Portia
Thyself shall see the act.

(Tis thine own deeds that fall upon thy head.)

For as thou urgest justice, be assured.

Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir'st.  

—Gratziano
O learnèd judge! Hear, Jew—a learnèd judge!

—Shylock
I take this offer, then. Pay thrice the bond

And let the Christian go.

—Bassanio
Here is the money.  

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150. {O upright Judge | Mark Jew. O learned Judge.}
This is the first of Gratziano’s mocking repetitions of Shylock and his praise of the judge. Gratziano repeats his counter-attack on the ‘Jew’ in a mantra-like fashion: O upright judge! Mark, Jew, O learned judge! [310]; O learned judge! Mark, Jew—a learned judge! [314]; O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge! [319]; A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew! [329]; A Daniel, still I say, a second Daniel! [I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word. [336]

151. In the original, two iambs are missing—which could suggest a pause. Some editions place the ‘pause’ after Portia’s last line [Unto the state of Venice]—which is clearly not indicated in Q1. Other editions place the pause after Portia’s line [Thyself shall see the act], which is possible, but unlikely.

Por: Unto the State of Venice [pause 1]
Shy: Is that the law
Por: Thyself shall see the act. [pause 3]

There is unlikely to be a pause [1] after Portia renders her judgment because Gratziano, in jubilation, would call out at once nor after Portia’s words, Thyself shall see the act, [3] because it comes in the middle of a thought. The most likely place for a pause would come after Gratziano’s line, Mark Jew. O learned judge!, [2] where a stunned Shylock must collect his thoughts—in the span of two iambs—before giving a reply.

152. This line is fitting, and would be said with surprise, in the case where Shylock’s intention (to kill Antonio) is thwarted by Portia. If the played was tweaked such that Shylock were made to spare Antonio’s life (before being forced to do so by Portia), this line would appear astray. A more likely line would be: ‘Here, I take the offer.’ This tweak is not supported by the dialogue in the play but a decidedly pro-Shylock production could force it in.

153. thou shalt have justice: This refers to the same kind of justice previously demanded by Shylock—justice without mercy, justice according to the strict letter of the law. Herein Portia turns Shylock’s own merciless literalism against him and out-literalizing him. She repeats this same charge for justice a few lines later, saying: ‘The Jew shall have all justice’ [317]; ‘He shall have merely justice and the bond.’ [335]. Ironically, Portia is now embodying the exact position (justice without mercy) that she had previously argued against. Her position now reflects a decidedly partial and “human” one: since Shylock did not grant mercy he does not deserve to receive it. One might argue that Portia’s new stance is contrary to God’s all-embracing (non judgmental) mercy which is dispensed without consideration of a person’s deservedness, earned worthiness, or past actions.

/‘Tis thine own deeds that fall upon thy head
154. Bassanio is liberally offering his (and Portia’s) money even though the case has already turned against Shylock. Either Bassanio is ignorant and naive (unaware that he can save himself 3000 ducats), impatient and aloof (having no concern about the 3000 ducats, only that Antonio be delivered without another moment’s delay), or equitable (feeling that Shylock deserves, at least, the return of his principle); after all, Shylock’s money did help Bassanio win Portia."

Is Portia being cruel or prudent? Is she seeking to harm Shylock in retribution for his inhumane actions against Antonio or is she refusing to have Bassanio pay the bond (even though he is eager and willing to pay it) as part of her own financial motivation? Her purpose to save Antonio has already been accomplished; her destruction of Shylock is something she herself—beyond the call of duty or purpose—has brought to bear.

As mentioned in the analysis of the main characters of the play, using the theory of Character Types (a full explanation of which can be found at the end of the website), Portia comes into the courtroom as a Type 3 (which is her natural Type) and thus tries to solve her problem in a typical Type 3 way—through shrewdness, ingenuity, appealing to reason,
circumvention, even deception and beguilement. However, she fails. So, she steps up her game and tries to be even more persuasive, more ingenious, more Type 3, but fails again. According to the theory of Character Types, when a person fails, or runs up against a wall, using the means that are natural to his Character Type, his first response is to increase the intensity of the same action. If that fails again—and he comes to realize that that same kind of action will keep on failing—he may to switch to the opposite Type, which is not necessarily natural to him but is available to him in times of crisis, or when he hits an impasse. In this case, once Portia tries to appeal to Shylock in every way she can, and then “hits a wall,” and sees that her present stratagem will not move Shylock, she shifts from a Type 3 approach to its opposite, which is Type 9. This approach is straight-forward and uncompromising; it is based on a guileless, frontal assault, and it can be somewhat merciless. Portia comes into the courtroom as a Type 3, exhibiting all the typical Type 3 ways to try and resolve the issue; when this fails she switches to a Type 9 approach, a steamroller approach, and proceeds to destroy Shylock, even after Antonio has been saved. After the courts scene ends she quickly refers back to her Type 3 approach (using charm, indirect means, trickery, etc.) to test Bassanio’s love for her. If she stayed a Type 9, the moment she was alone with Bassanio she would have pulled off her disguise and berated him for all the things he said about her in the courtroom.
Portia [raising her hand]

Soft, o the Jew o shall have all justice. Soft, no haste— / Wait // He

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

—Gratziano

O Jew! An upright judge, a learnèd judge!

—Portia

Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

But just a o pound of flesh. If thou tak’est more / But a just

Or less than a just pound, be it by o so much [but]

As makes it light or heavy by the weight o 157 [in the substance]

Or the division of a twentieth part

Of one poor scruple o—nay, if the scales do turn o / gram / ounce 158 // tip / move

But in* the measure of a single hair, o 159 [Upon] {But in the estimation of a hair}

Thou diest, o and all thy goods will be taken. o 160 / You’ll die {are confiscate} / are forfeited

—Gratziano

A second Daniel. Here, O Jew, a Daniel! 161

Now, infidel, I have you in my grip. o [on the hip] 162

—Portia

Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

—Shylock

Give me my principle o and let me go. / the sum I’m owed

155. soft, no haste: don’t rush things, there is no need to take any rash actions—hold back and let the matter follow its course. In consort with a previous stage direction, Portia could slam something down, and make a loud noise—to signal a stop to Bassanio’s offer—and then come back with some “soft” words.

156. {Soft! The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste.}

/ Soft, for the Jew shall have only justice / The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste!

The line, as it appears in Q1 and F [Soft, the Jew shall have all justice, soft no haste] is problematic in that it contains 11 syllables and does not conform to the standard meter, where the 4th syllable is emphatic. To correct this problem, most editions break the line into two, with one word [Soft!] on the first line, the additional ten syllables on the second line:

Por: Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste.

157. As that which makes it high or low in weight | By the

158. a scruple: a very small weight, equal to 1/24 oz.

159. But in the measure equal to a hair / By but the distance (/measure) of a single hair / estimation: refers to some measure or value, either a) the distance that the indicator of the scale moves (if the balance indicator of the scales move by a distance of a hair, in either direction) or b) the weight of one hair (if one side weighs a hair more than the other).

160. Of but one twentieth part of an ounce— | Nay, if the scales do tip upon the weight | Of but a single hair, then thou will die | And all thy goods will go unto the state.

161. {A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew}

162. on the hip: Refers to a wrestling term where one opponent has the other by the hip, and thus commands a position of advantage. It could also be stated: ‘Now I have the better of you,’ ‘Now I have the advantage’ or, more literally, ‘Now I’ve got hold of you’ or ‘Now I’ve got a grip on you.’ The same expression was used by Shylock when first referring to Antonio [1.3.43-44]: ‘If I can catch him once upon the hip I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.’—‘If I can, but once, grab hold of him . . .’
—Bassanio
I have it ready for thee—here it is. 163

—Portia [to Bassanio]
He hath refused it in the open court. 164
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

—Gratiano
A Daniel! Still say I, a second Daniel! 165
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

—Shylock
Shall I not have barely my principle? 166

—Portia
Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, To be so taken at thy peril, Jew. 167

—Shylock 168
Well then, the devil has made good of it! 169
I'll stay to argue no more. 170

163. [I have it ready for thee. Here it is]. Bassanio offers Shylock the money—and again Portia denies this offer. For Bassanio the matter is over, the fate of the 3000 ducats is unimportant (in light of Antonio being saved). Bassanio is not at all focused on Shylock nor interested in his fate, nor in Venetian justice; nor is he concerned with some legal maneuver to destroy Shylock—his only interest is Antonio. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.333]

164. Portia is addressing Bassanio’s offer, not Shylock. And, despite her husband’s wishes, she is over-riding his generous and merciful offer. She, on the other hand, is now protracting the case; it seems she has a new agenda—to destroy Shylock unopposed by simply saving Antonio. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.335]

165. Shylock likened Portia’s judgement (when it sided with him) to that of Daniel. Here, when the tables have turned, Gratiano uses that same praise, calling Portia a Daniel. Daniel, like Portia, was a youth with the wisdom of an elder. He was so renowned for wisdom and knowledge that his name became a proverb among the Babylonians, ‘As wise as Daniel’ [Ezek. 28.3]. In the Book of Daniel [2.26], Daniel is named Baltassar (Hebrew: Belshazzar). Portia enters the court under the name Balthasar (or Balthazar).

166. When Shylock is thwarted from getting his pound of flesh he accepts the prior offer of thrice the principal. When getting this triple sum seems unlikely, and he accepts defeat, he is ready to be done with the matter. Thus, he only asks for the minimum amount he can expect, which is the return of his principle, yet Portia refuses even this.

167. / Which thou must take at thine own peril, Jew.

168. After Portia provides her superior position, Shylock markedly retreats. Rather than being defiant he gives no defense at all (and later we see him as being even more sheepish when he, without protest or appeal, meekly voices the words, I am content. To offer an alternative to his abrupt reversal of demeanor, the following lines could be added:

< And now who works to do the devil’s bidding?—
'Tis not a thief who comes by way of night
But one who walks in the full light of day,
Hiding beneath the glib pretense of justice.> / Beneath the cozen pretense of justice.

169. [Why then, the devil give him good of it!]  
> Why then, the devil’s done some good work here  
/ Why then, the devil’s work has well been done! / Well then, to hell with you and all your justice!

170. {I'll stay no longer question}
question: to argue, protest, or debate the case.
Here Shylock gives up, accepts defeat, and accepts the loss his principle—and now, in a position of weakness, he is trying to make a quick exit, before Portia heaps something else on him. But alas, he once again hears the ominous words, Tarry, Jew.
Portia

Tarry Jew,
The law hath yet another hold on you.  

It is enacted\(^\circ\) in the laws of Venice, If it be proved against a foreigner,\(^\circ\) 172
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen
The party ‘gainst the which he doth conspire \(^{174}\)  
Shall seize\(^\circ\) one half\(^\circ\) his goods; the other half
Goes\(^\circ\) to the private\(^\circ\) coffer of the state,
And the offender’s life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, and his word is final.\(^\circ\) 175
In this\(^\circ\) predicament I say thou stand’st.
For it appears, by all that has transpired,\(^\circ\) 176 177
That indirectly, and directly too,\(^\circ\)
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant,\(^\circ\) and thou hast incurred\(^\circ\)
The very crime\(^\circ\) that I\(^\circ\) just now\(^\circ\) stated.\(^{178}\)
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.\(^{179}\)

Gratziano\(^{180}\)

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself!
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not sums enough to buy the rope.\(^\circ\)
Therefore, thou must be hanged at the state’s charge.\(^{181}\)

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171. In the source novella (Il Perecone), upon which the story of The Merchant of Venice is based, the Jewish usurer is defeated by the wits of the female judge, the merchant is saved, and the Jew leaves the court with nothing, not even his principal. Here, the author departs from the source story by adding proceedings where the Jew is not only defeated but destroyed—both in terms of his wealth and his Judaism. The forced conversion of Shylock is not found in the source story. [See Additional Note, 4.1.342]

172. Shylock is held to be an alien, not a citizen.

173. alien: refers to foreigners and non-Venetians. Jews, at the time, were not allowed to own property in Venice and were therefore held as ‘aliens.’

174. / The party ‘gainst whom he hath so contrived

175. / So granted by the Duke, whose word is final / Of the good Duke, who has the final word
   / And the offender’s life lies in what mercy | Is bestowed by the Duke

176. / For it appears, as all those here have witnessed

177. {In which predicament I say thou stand’st; | For it appears by manifest proceeding}
   / And this predicament is one in which
   / Thou stand. For it appears, by these proceedings\(^\circ\) / by your own actions / all we’ve witnessed
   / And this predicament, I say, is one | In which thou stand. As everyone has witnessed
   / And this, I say, is the predicament | In which thou stand. For it has so appeared, | By the proceedings, witnessed here by all

178. {The danger formerly by me rehearsed}
   / The penalty that I have erstwhile stated / The punishment of which I have just stated

179. Again, we see that Portia’s actions—aiming to harm Shylock—go beyond the call of what was needed to free Antonio. We can only surmise that her intention changed midstream after she encountered Shylock, a person whose demeanor, vengefulness, and complete lack of mercy was alien and offensive to Portia’s human sentiments. As such, she found herself newly motivated—after she had delivered Antonio—to now try and destroy or diminish this abhorrent person.

180. As part of the staging, Gratziano could run over to ‘help’ Shylock get down on his knees.

181. For some dialogue which could be included here, see Additional Notes: 4.1.363
—Duke
That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For half thy wealth—it is Antonio’s. / As for thy wealth, one half goes to Antonio.
The other half goes to the general state, [comes]
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine. / lesson to

—Portia
Ay, for the state, not for Antonio. 184

—Shylock
Nay, take my life and all! Pardon not that!
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live. 186
  (Nay, show your Christian mercy—kill me now!)

—Portia
What mercy can you render him, Antonio? 189

—Gratiano
A noose, for free—and nothing else by God! 190 {A halter, gratis}

—Antonio
So please my lord, the Duke, and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods— / To drop
I am content with that,191 so long as he
Will let me use the other half in trust

182. / Lest humbleness reduce it to a fine.
184. Why is Portia so keen on making sure that Antonio be given half of Shylock’s money? What is her agenda in assuring this outcome? Why not have the Duke forgive the whole amount—or simply drive both “unto a fine”? [See Additional Notes, 4.1.335] 4.1.369 ???
185. house: in the first instance, it is used in the biblical sense of one’s lineage or the ‘the house of Abraham’; in the second instance it refers to Shylock’s house (or symbolically, his life) and the wealth (prop) which sustains or supports it.
186. The following passage could replace the original:
‘Tis more esteemed than you take a man’s life / fitting
Than cast him into hellish poverty.
You take my wealth, the labor of my life,
The comfort of mine age, my children’s hope—
This passage was derived from Marlow’s, The Jew of Malta. It is likely that Shakespeare fashioned Shylock’s lines after those of Marlow’s Barabas, who uttered these lines after losing all his money:
Why I esteem the injury far less, | To take the lives of miserable men, | Than be the causers of their misery;
You have my wealth, the labor of my life, | The comfort of mine age, my children’s hope; | And there ne’er distinguish of the wrong.
189. Shylock’s plea may have softened Portia, who a few moments before was quick to make certain that the Duke’s forgiveness only extended so far as the state and not Antonio. Here, she asks Antonio to show mercy, and he shows a Christian brand of mercy. This ‘show of mercy’ delivers Shylock to a much worse position than he was in before Antonio was called on to show his mercy. Before, Shylock lost his principle and half his wealth; after, Shylock lost his principle, half his money was put into a trust, and he was forced to convert to Christianity—which deprived him of his faith, his lifestyle, his livelihood, (usury), and the support of his fellow Jews.
190. For additional lines, see Additional Notes, 4.1.379
191. Antonio is ‘content’ and agrees with the Duke’s show of mercy, that the state forgives the fine for one half of Shylock’s wealth—under the condition that Antonio gets the other have to use in trust.
To give, upon his death, unto the Christian
Who, as of late, did steal away his daughter
And two conditions more: that for this favour
He presently forswear all acts of usury.
(That he may garner a more Christian kindness.)
The other, that he do record a gift,
Which leaves upon his death, all his possessions.
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

—Duke
He shall do this or else I do recant
The pardon that I just pronounced here.

—Portia
Art thou contented Jew? What dost thou say?

—Shylock
I am content.

[192] I am content, so he will let me have | The other half in use, to render it | Upon his death, unto the gentleman
 /I am content with that, so long as I | Can use the other half in trust, and give it | Upon his death . . .
 /The other half I am hereby content | To use in trust, and then to render it | Upon his death . . .
[193] That lately stole his daughter
 /That, as of late, did steal away his daughter.
[194] Antonio has provided a meager ‘favour’ to Shylock: instead of taking half his wealth he is going to have the money put into a trust (which Antonio manages). This arrangement is set up by Antonio to preserve the principal, so that Lorenzo (and Jessica) will have some assured wealth when Shylock dies. The benefit afforded to Shylock with this arrangement—which is unclear—would be if Shylock were the beneficiary of any profit gained from the management of the trust. Hence, the most favorable arrangement set up by Antonio would be as follows: Shylock would put up half his money in trust, Antonio would manage the money, Shylock would gain whatever profit was made, and Lorenzo and Jessica would receive the principal upon Shylock’s death.
[195] The original line reads: ‘He presently become a Christian.’ This forced conversion of Shylock is the most controversial and problematic line in the play. Such a conversion was not found in any of the source stories used by Shakespeare (such as the play’s primary source, Il Perecone). In those versions the Jewish money-lender is foiled, the bond is forfeit, the merchant is saved, and the Jew loses his principal—and storms out of court in defeat. The forced conversion of Shylock to Christianity is Shakespeare’s addition, rather than ‘the Jew’ storming out of court as enfeebled and broken man. Some productions use this destructive ending to further present Shylock as a victim while others chose to delete this line altogether. The primary reason I have replaced it with a sanction barring Shylock from usury is that the original line is unnecessary, confusing, and diminishes the character of both Antonio and Shylock. This forced conversion was likely an extension of Antonio’s brand of Christian of charity, his effort to save Shylock’s soul from eternal damnation. In this rectification I have made it clear that the whole of Antonio’s dispute with Shylock is founded upon his “ungodly” usury not his Jewishness. Thus, Antonio forcing Shylock to convert to Christianity obscures and displaces the real issue here; it brings to the forefront the difference between Christian and Jew rather than the difference between Antonio’s Christian charity and the morally bereft and ruinous practice of usury.
[See Additional Notes, 4.1.383] For a further discussion on Shylock’s forced conversion see Appendix.
[196] A production that preserves Shylock’s conversion, could have him voice a few lines of protest rather than the presenting—as in the original—a stark implosion of his character and an uncharacteristically sheepish acceptance of his fate.
[See Additional Notes, 4.1.382]
[197] Here in the court, of all he dies possessed | Here in the court, which leaves all owned at death | In court, that all he owns at death will go | Here in the court, all he owns at his death.
[198] Portia is still calling Shylock ‘Jew.’ Though, in the original, where he must convert to Christianity, we see that the ‘conversion’ is merely a glossing over; Shylock will, at heart and in secret—and in the eyes of all Christians—remain a Jew. Even his daughter, who married a Christian, and willingly converted to Christianity, is still regarded by her fellow Christians as an ‘infidel’ [3.2.216]—a Jew masquerading as a Christian.
[199] At this point, Shylock is portrayed as a broken man—having been stripped of half his wealth and forced (without a fight) to convert to Christianity. Here he utters a feckless and feeble, I am content, simply mouthing back Portia’s own words, without any hint of protest. It may be that Shylock’s quick acceptance may be a result of calculation rather than total defeat: he may be wanting to protect the money he has left and avoid opening himself up to, yet unknown, further harm. His words, I am content, surely belies his true position—he is not content. He might be thinking: ‘I am content to say ‘I am content.’ But as for the Christian duplicity—cheating me of my earned wealth, I am very far from being content.’
—Portia [to Nerissa] Clerk, write\(^o\) a deed of gift. \[^{draw}\] > draw up / write up

—Shylock
I pray you, give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. 200 Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

—Duke Get thee gone,\(^o\) but do it. \[^{/ You may go}\]

—Gratziano [to Shylock]
Had I been judge, thou would not walk from court:
I would have found twelve men to make a jury
Who, upon finding you guilty, would drag
You by the feet straightway\(^o\) unto the gallows. 201

Exit Shylock 202

—Duke [to Portia]
Sir, I entreat you with me home for dinner.

—Portia
I humbly do request\(^o\) your grace of\(^o\) pardon. \[^{desire}\] / graceful
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is best\(^o\) I presently set forth.\(^o\) \[^{meet}\] / that I set forth at once

—Duke
I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, fully thank\(^o\) this gentleman\(^o\) \[^{gratify}\] // thank wholeheartedly this man
For, in my mind, you are much in his debt.\(^o\) 203 \[^{ bound to him}\]

Exeunt Duke and his attendants

200. In productions where Shylock is a ‘broken man,’ he is not well—and because he is not well, and feeling sickly—he desires to leave the court. In productions where Shylock is still intact, this is clearly a ruse to get himself out of the court and removed from harm’s way. \[^{I am not feeling well} is decidedly a cliché excuse, which cannot be taken at face value.\]
Like the mouthed words, \[^{I am content}, Shylock’s I am not well is not likely to express his true state.\]

201. In the original, where Shylock is converted to Christianity, Gratziano refers to the ‘mercy’ of Shylock’s upcoming baptism: \[^{In christ’ning shalt thou have two godfathers.}\]
Had I been the judge, thou shouldst have ten more—
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.}
An emended version of this passage might read as follows:
/ In christening\(^o\) shalt thou have two godfathers.
Had I been judge, thou should’st have had ten more—
To make a jury which, finding you guilty,
‘Twould bring thee to the gallows, not the font.
Gratziano is saying: Besides the two godfathers (who will accompany you at baptism) I, being judge, would have rather asked for ten more men to make up a jury of twelve men, who would then find you guilty of the charge and bring you to the gallows (to be hanged) instead of to the font (to be baptized).

202. Shylock’s exit determines the amount of sympathy the audience has for him. He could glumly walk out of the court. He could be jeered at as he walks out. Or, more brutally, Gratziano could grab Shylock ‘by the hip,’ wrestle him to the ground, and then (along with several helpers) push him out of the court (or drag him out). \[^{When tackled to the ground, Shylock drops his bag. It could be emptied and mockingly placed over his head. Then Gratziano kicks the faceless Shylock out of court.}\]

203. \[^{/ Antonio, give your fullest gratitude | To this man; thinks me you’re much in his debt.\]}
—Bassanio [to Portia]
Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have, by your wisdom, been this day delivered\(^\circ\) / acquitted / relieved
Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof,
From
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew, \(^\circ\)
We freely give for all your courteous\(^\circ\) pains. \(^\circ\) // gracious

—Antonio
Yet, over and above, in love and service, \(^\circ\)
We stand forevermore within your debt. \(^\circ\) \(^\circ\)
// indebted to you evermore

—Portia [refusing]
He is well-paid who\(^\circ\) is well-satisfied
And I, in helping you,\(^\circ\) am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well-paid.
It ne’er did cross\(^\circ\) my mind to ask for payment. \(^\circ\) // never crossed
[to Bassanio] I pray you, ‘know’ me when we meet again. \(^\circ\)
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

—Bassanio \(^\circ\)
Dear sir, perforce\(^\circ\) I must entreat\(^\circ\) you further—
Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:
Not to deny me this kind-hearted\(^\circ\) offer
And ere to pardon me for such insistence. \(^\circ\)

—Portia
You press me far, and therefore I will yield:
Give me your gloves, I’ll wear them for your sake. \(^\circ\)

---
204. / Have, by the wisdom you’ve shown us this day, | Been spared of grievous penalties; in lieu | Whereof, three thousand ducats owed the Jew,
205. / We freely cope your courteous pains withal
We freely offer you for all your pains. / We freely give to you for all your pains.
cope: match, give in exchange for
206. / O’er and above, \(^\circ\) in both love and in service / Far and beyond
207. / We stand forever indebted to you / We stand here now forever in your debt
208. / And stand indebted, over and above | In love and service to you evermore.}
209. / My mind was never yet more mercenary
/ My mind was never bent on compensation / hope of payment / on recompense
210. know me: a) recognize me, b) make love with me.
   *This word is found in a biblical context, as in ‘Adam knew Eve.’ Portia is saying, ‘I pray (hope) you know me in a different way (as husband and wife) when we meet again.’ She might also be saying: ‘I pray (hope) you make love with me when we meet again’—as you failed to do so on our wedding night.’*
211. Some productions have Bassanio run after Portia, and these lines are delivered without Antonio being immediately present. Other productions have the dialogue continues with Antonio present.
212. / Dear sir, please wait, I must insist again—
213. / Not to deny me, and to pardon me.]
214. / to oblige you
[See Additional Notes, 4.1.422]
And for your love, I’ll take this ring from you. \[he draws back his hand\]
Do not draw back your hand—I’ll take no more. \[he draws back his hand\]
And you, in love, shall not deny me this!  

—Bassanio
This ring, good sir, alas, it is\(^\circ\) a trifle.  
I will not shame myself to give you this.

—Portia
I will have nothing else, but only this;
And now, methinks, I have a wish for it.\(^\circ\)  
{I have a mind to it} / I grow quite fond of it

—Bassanio
There’s more depends on this than on the value.\[3.2.19\]
The dearest\(^\circ\) ring in Venice will I give you;  
And find it out by searching through the city.\[3.2.20\]  
{proclamation} / a public announcement
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

—Portia
I see, sir, you are liberal\(^\circ\) in offers.\[3.2.21\]  
You taught\(^\circ\) me first to beg and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should\(^\circ\) be answered.\[3.2.22\]  
/must

—Bassanio
Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife.
And when she put it on she made me vow
That I should\(^\circ\) neither\(^\circ\) sell, nor give, nor lose it.  
/would / never

215. for your love: A customary politeness, which, in the usual sense would mean, ‘as a token of your love,’ or ‘as a sign of your affection and/or gratitude.’
216. I’ll take no more: Here she light-heartedly suggests to Bassanio that he need not be afraid, she will not take his hand, just the ring. Ironically, Bassanio later thinks to cut off his own hand (and say he lost the ring in a fight) in order to avert Portia’s rage at him for giving away the ring. [5.1.177-78].
217. in love: in kindness. It could mean, ‘you, in the name of love.’ This statement carries an ironic overtone, for Bassanio in giving away the ring in love to the doctor, is symbolically giving away his love for Portia (who gave him the ring).
218. / This ring good sir?—Alas it is a trifle.
219. This ring has more upon it than its value / This ring holds something more than outer value
220. {And find it out by proclamation}
221. > You are liberal (only) in what you offer but not in what you actually give (once the offer is accepted).
222. / You answer me now as you would a beggar
—Portia
That ‘scuse serves many men to save their gifts. / ploy
And if your wife be not a madwoman, / tinged / struck
And know how well I have deserved this ring.
She would not hold you in contempt forever / bear you enmity
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

Exeunt Portia and Nerissa

—Antonio
My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.
Let his deservings and my love for you / in all
Be valued ‘gainst the vow made to your wife. / weighed against

—Bassanio [gives the ring to Gratziano]
Go, Gratziano, run and overtake him.
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst, / and bid him dine with us
Unto Antonio's house. Away! Make haste!

Exit Gratziano

(And now, dear friend, the world is truly right,
‘Tis time we cheer and laugh into the night.)
When morning comes, unto Belmont we go,
In blessed freedom—come Antonio.

Exeunt

223. / By that excuse, a man may save his gift.
224. / And if your wife be not wrought with madness / tinged / struck
225. / Should she know how well I deserved this ring
226. / She would not hold out enemy for ever
hold out enemy: hold you as an enemy; hate you; be angry with you
/ She would not be your enemy forever / She'd not be angry at you forever / She would not hold a long grudge against you
227. My Lord: a formal term which appeals to Bassanio's newfound status—and refers to his being lord over his house and his wife. A more likely expression may have been, 'My dear Bassanio.'
228. / Be weighed against the vow you made your wife / the promise made to your wife
229. Q1 reads as follows:
{Come, you and I will go thither presently.
And in the morning, early, we will both
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.}
Oftentimes a rhyming couplet is used to mark the close of a scene, however, no such couplet is found in the original.
230. / And in the morning, early we will go | And fly to Belmont. Come, Antonio.
/ When morning comes, to Belmont we will fly.| Without a care, together, you and I.
/ Come, you and I have finished this plight, | Now let us cheer with friends into the night.
Unto your house, let’s go, without delay | And fly to Belmont 'pon the break of day.
ACT FOUR - Scene 2

A street in Venice. Enter Portia and Nerissa, still in disguise

—Portia
Inquire the way unto the Jew’s abode, / Find out
And have him sign the deed. We’ll then away / We’ll leave tonight
And be at home a day before our husbands.
This deed will be a blessing to Lorenzo. / well welcome

—Gratziano
Fair sir, at last, I have ov’raken you. / I have caught up with you
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice, / reflection > consideration
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat / request
Your company at dinner.

—Portia That cannot be . . .
(For we must leave for Padua tonight.) / at once
But I accept his ring most thankfully, / His ring I do accept
And so I pray you tell him. Furthermore, / thus
I pray you show my youth old Shylock’s house.

—Gratziano That I will do.

1. Of course, Portia, who was called in to settle the matter between Shylock and Antonio, would not be involved in the tedious administration of drafting the deed of gifts nor would she be sent to Shylock’s house to have it signed by him—especially not after she indicated her need to return to Padua forthwith. In addition, the fact that Portia has no legal experience would be revealed had she anything to do with the drafting of Shylock’s deed of gift. Yet, despite the unlikelihood of the scene, it is needed to allow time for Nerissa to obtain her ring from Gratziano, and also allow her time to get hold of the deed of gift to give to Lorenzo.

2. Inquire directions unto the Jew’s house / Have someone show you the way to the Jew’s house
3. {Inquire the Jew’s house out, give him the deed | And let him sign it. We’ll leave tonight.}
4. {Fair sir, you are well o’erta’en} o’erta’en: overtaken. Q1: ore-tane
   Some editors feel that this line was truncated so that Gratziano had a chance to regain his breath, after a chase. The pause, however, is not warranted and the shortened line (along with the awkward contraction, ‘o’erta’en, —may be a result of an unreadable portion of text. Since this truncated line adds no appreciable meaning to the text the iambic pentameter has been restored.
   / Fair sir, I have at last, caught up with you. / Fair sir, I’ve come upon you at last. Hence,
5. The subject of Portia’s negation (‘that cannot be’) is unclear: it could refer to her disbelief that Bassanio gave up his ring and/or to the impossibility of her joining Bassanio for dinner—though, if it be the latter, then the response of ‘I cannot’ would bring more clarity. (The Duke had already entreated her to join him for dinner—which she humbly denied [397-400] so there would be no way for her accept Bassanio’s invitation. Obviously Bassanio did not hear the Duke’s prior invitation or Portia’s reply).
   The most likely playing of this line is for Portia to speak the words in disbelief (to others or bemuseingly to herself), in reference to Bassanio having given up his ring. But then she catches herself, pauses, and qualifies her previous line as a reference to her not being able to meet Bassanio for dinner. In the original, the reference of ‘that cannot be’ is uncertain, though it later seems to refer to the dinner invitation. In the rectification, a clarifying line has been added to make her intent more explicit—and to support the staging that is herein suggested.
—Nerissa Sir, I would speak with you?
[aside, to Portia] I’ll see if I can get my husband’s ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep forever.

—Portia [aside, to Nerissa]
Thou mayst, I’m sure. And then we’ll have much swearing
That they did give the rings away to men.
But we’ll outstare them and outswear them too.
Away! Make haste! Thou know’st where I will tarry.

Exit

—Nerissa [to Gratiano]
Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

Exeunt
ACT FIVE - Scene One

Portia’s house in Belmont. A garden. Moonlight.

—Lorenzo
The moon shines bright, on such a night as this, [in]
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees— / soft
And they did make no noise. On such a night
Did young prince Troilus mount the Trojan walls / climb
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night. 2

—Jessica
On such a night, [In] 3
Did Thisbé go to meet with Pyramus; / her beloved
But saw the lion’s shadow ere himself
And ran away in fright. 3

—Lorenzo
On such a night,
Queen Dido stood upon the wild shore 3  

1. As it stands, Act Five is too long and most productions seek ways to reduce it. (Before 1900 it was a common practice to simply delete the whole of Act Five, even though such aggressive editing left the play ‘hanging.’ This, however, was favored to leaving the audience hanging and burdened by an overly-protracted final act.)

One way to reduce the length of Act Five is to export the whole of Lorenzo’s and Jessica’s dialogue to 3.5. This dialogue would replace the whole of the original 3.5, a scene that is wholly lacking and irrelevant. (Specifically, 5.1.1-21 and 5.1.54-110, could be exported). After such editing, the scene would open at 5.1.88 with the entrance of Portia and Nerissa. To further shorten Act Five, the scene could open at 5.1.110, with the entrance of Lorenzo and Jessica from one side, and Portia and Nerissa from the other:

Lor: Is that dear Portia? Lady, welcome home!
Por: We have been praying for our husband’s welfare
     Which speed we hope the better for our words.
     Has my husband returned?
Lor: Madam, not yet:
     But there is come a messenger before
     To signify their coming.
Por: Lorenzo, Jessica—quickly go in
     Give order to my servants that they take
     No note at all of our being absent hence.

In this reduction of Act Five Lorenzo and Jessica would exit after line 122 [Lor: ‘We are no telltales, madam, fear not’] and re-enter after 288 [Por: How now Lorenzo?]. The action of having Lorenzo and Jessica exit (to inform the servants) accomplishes two things: a) it resolves the anomaly of line 117 where Portia instructs Nerissa to ‘give order’ to the servants but, because Nerissa is involved in the following action, she cannot leave the stage to accomplish this task; and b) it allows Lorenzo and Jessica to leave the stage and not dissipate the action by their presence (for none of the following dialogue, over 150 lines of it, [123-287] involve Lorenzo or Jessica. The pair’s later re-entrance (a few minutes later) could come after 288, as Portia asks, ‘How now Lorenzo?’ which is a perfect greeting for a character’s entrance upon the stage.

In addition, the resolution involving the mis-given rings contains repetition and, if one desired to shorten Act Five, some of this dialogue could be edited: a) delete 32 lines: 192-217 and 229-233 and 235, or b) delete 11 lines: 207-217.

2. / Methinks the Trojan prince Troilus did mount | The city walls, and sighed his soul toward
   The Grecian tents below, where his beloved | Cressida lay that night.

3. Every verse in this night game begins with ‘In such a night’ rather than ‘On such a night.’
With a willow in hand, wafting her love / Holding a willow, and
To come again to Carthage.

—Jessica

On such a night,

Medea gathered herbs that restored life To Jason’s dying father.

—Lorenzo

On such a night,

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,

And with a poor belov’d / did run from Venice

As far as Belmont.

—Jessica

Yes, on such a night,

Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,

Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,

And not a one was true.

—Lorenzo

On such a night,

Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,

Slander her love—and he forgave it her.

—Jessica

I would outplay you had nobody come

But hark, I hear the footsteps of a man.

Enter Stephano, a messenger

—Lorenzo

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

4. {Stood Dido with a willow in her hand | Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love | To come again to Carthage} / Stood the forsaken queen Dido upon | The wild shore wafting her love to return.

5. An additional line, concerning the legend, could be added: ‘But alas, | Aeneus ne’er returned.’

6. An additional line could be added: ‘Yet Jason still left her for Creon’s daughter.’

7. It is revealing that the lovers, shown together for the first time, only cite stories and legends that tell of betrayal, abandonment, and tragedy—all ending in death. Thus, the outer appearance of harmony belies the underlying turmoil of the two lovers. Perhaps the author used this game of free-association as a way to reveal some of this unspoken, yet looming, inner conflicts within the souls of Lorenzo and Jessica.

It’s interesting to note that the portions of the legends recalled by these two lovers tell only of the romanticized aspects—such as the images of the legends that take place under the full moon. Yet, when the full scope of these stories are revealed we see that they all end in tragedy. Outwardly, Lorenzo and Jessica are surrounded by the lush gardens of Belmont, christened by the moonlight—which affords them the luxury of a borrowed moment. Soon they must give up this moonlite world and face the harsh reality of their situation. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.13] [See Appendix: “Night Game” for summaries of the four legends].

8. unthrift love: a) a poor or wasteful lover, or love, (such as Lorenzo) or b) a wasteful, carefree (or extravagant) kind of love that is unconcerned with wealth; a love that spends now and is not concerned with the future.

9. (and he forgave it her)

10. out-night: outplay you (in mention of all these things that the night reminds us of)

11. / I would outplay you at this night game—but | Listen, I hear the stepping of a man.

12. This line has five iambs which, when combined with the next line (of one iamb), creates a line of six iambs. To rectify this, one iamb could be removed. Hence: / Who comes in silence of the night? / Who comes to break the night’s silence?
—Stephano  
A friend.

—Lorenzo  
What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend?  

—Stephano  
Stephano is my name, and I bring word:  
My mistress will, before the break of day, 
Be here at Belmont. She doth pause nearby \( \circ \)  
The holy crosses where \( \circ \) she kneels and prays  
For happy wedlock hours.

—Lorenzo  
Who comes with her?

—Stephano  
None but a holy hermit and her maid.  
I pray you, is my master yet returned?

—Lorenzo  
He has not, and we have not heard from him.  
But go we in, \( \circ \) I pray thee, Jessica  
And, with respect and love, \( \circ \) let us prepare  
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Trumpet sound, made by Launcelet, is heard offstage.  
Enter Launcelet

—Launcelet  
Da-doo! Da-doo! Wo ha ho! Do-ta-da-do-ta-da-doooo!  

13. The original seems to have a stray iamb, which suggests that the phrase, ‘a friend,’ was mistakenly repeated by Lorenzo. Q1 reads as follows:  
Mess: A friend!  
Lor: A friend, what friend? Your name I pray you friend?

Rectified:  
Mess: A friend!  
Lor: What friend? Your name I pray you friend?

14. {She doth stray about | By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays}  
15. {Sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!}

Some commentators hold that this is an imitation of a post horn and that Launcelet is mouthing this tune to announce the arrival of himself, as a postman or courier (‘a post’), who has come to deliver a message. Sola is used as a hunting cry in Love's Labor Lost and Launcelet could be imitating this cry or bleating out the sound of a hunting horn. Wo ha, ho is used as a falconer’s call. What we have here, then, is another case of Launcelet’s mis-mashing. Consistent with the fool’s mocking and irreverent tone—found amply in 3.5, and also in the next few lines—it may be that Launcelet is parodying a tucket, which is a distinct trumpet signature played to announce the arrival of royalty or a very important person. Indeed, later in the scene we find Bassanio—who is hardly royalty—being announced with a tucket [5.1.122] and perhaps Launcelet, knowing about Bassanio’s newfound tucket (which may be seen as a pretentious self-assignment of status), is here mocking it with his own, self-styled tucket. It could also be that he is using this mouthed tucket to mockingly announce Lorenzo, who is temporarily acting as master of the house.

In this rectification, Launcelet mouths a more familiar tone, which most people would recognize as a trumpet melody that announces someone’s arrival. More effective than mouthing the entry found in the original (sola!) or in this rectification (da-doo!) would be for Launcelet to form a mouthpiece with his fingers and actually blow out the sound of a mock trumpet—playing ‘da-doo’ and speaking ‘wa ha ho.’
—Lorenzo    Who calls?

—Launcelet  Da-doo! Did you see Master Lorenzo? [calling] Master Lorenzo! Da-doo, Da-doo!  

—Lorenzo    Leave° hollering° man: I am here!  

/Stop   {halloaing}  

—Launcelet  Where? Where?  

—Lorenzo    Here!

—Launcelet  Tell him there’s a messenger° come from my master with his mouth° full of good news. My master will be here before morning.  

message: {post} mouth: {horn}

Exit

—Lorenzo    Sweet soul, let’s in° and there await° their coming.  

And yet no matter—why should we go in? My friend Stephano, please announce,° I pray you,  

Within the house, their mistress is at hand,°  

And bring some music forth into the air.  

Exit Stephano

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank.  

Here we will sit and let the sounds° of music  

Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night  

Become the touches of sweet harmony.  

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor° of heaven°  

16. {Sola, did you see M. Lorenzo, & M. Lorenzo sola, sola}— Q1
Most editions treat the ampersand as a misprint for question mark, which is suspect, since there is also a comma, but justifiable since this line is in the form of a question. ‘M.’ is also an abbreviation for Master (or Mistress) and most editions fill out the ‘M. Lorenzo’ to read ‘Master Lorenzo.’  
Varied forms of punctuation are: ‘Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola.’ (Oxford, Cambridge, Arden, Folger); ‘Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? [Calls.] Master Lorenzo! Sola! Sola!’ (Arden); ‘Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo and Mistress Lorenzo? Sola, sola!’ (Norton, Signet)

17. {Leave hollering man, here.}

hollering (Oxford, Applause); holloaing (Cambridge, Kittredge Norton, Pelican, Signet); holloing (Bevington) leave holloring: a) leave hollering—stop hollering, b) leave holloaing—stop making hunting calls

18. {Sola! Where, where?}

In the previous line, a second iamb was added (instead of ‘here’ it reads, ‘here I am’); thus, in this line, one iamb has been removed 45(‘sola’) to preserve the meter.

19. Launcelet continues with his mocking: he clearly knows the whereabouts of Lorenzo but continues to ignore him. This could be a metaphor for Lorenzo’s low status and wealth (which no one can see). Launcelet’s mockery continues in the next line when he is delivering a message to Lorenzo yet referring to him in the third person, as though he were not there: Tell him there’s a post come from my master.

20. Q1 reads, {My master will be here ere morning, sweet soul.} Most editions transpose the last iamb (‘sweet soul’) which is decidedly out of place here, to Lorenzo’s next line, which not only fits the context, but completes the meter.

21. / And have the players fill the air with music.

22. touches: notes produced by the fingers touching the strings of an instrument, especially a harp
Is thick inlaid with patterns\(^o\) of bright gold.
In but\(^o\) the smallest orb\(^o\) which thou behold’st
There sounds\(^o\) the heavenly voice of an angel\(^{24} 25\)
In the e’erlastin\(^o\)g choir of cherubins.\(^{26} 27\)
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this earthly body\(^o\) of decay
Doth grossly close it in,\(^o\) we cannot hear it.\(^{28} 29\)

Enter musicians

[to the musicians] Come ho, and wake Diana\(^o\) with a hymn;\(^{30} 31\)
With\(^o\) sweetest touches\(^{32}\) find\(^o\) your mistress’ ear,\(^{33}\)
And draw\(^o\) her home with music.

Music plays

—Jessica
I’m\(^o\) never merry when I hear sweet\(^34\) music.\(^{35} 36\)

23. patens: small dishes or plates, often made of gold, used in Holy Communion. F2 emends patens with patterns, which is in keeping with the imagery of harmony—especially since constellations were thought to reflect the patterns of human life—but less precise. Pattern is used here, not because it is more apt but because it is more readily understood than patens. 24. / There, in his motion, sings as would an angel / Sings in his motion like a blessed angel / There, in his motion, like an angel sings / His motion plays like the song of an angel / His motion sings with the voice of an angel / His motion sounds as does an angel sing
25. {There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st} / But in his motion like an angel sings
26. {Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins} Q1: still quiring
   still choiring: eternally singing, always singing in perfect harmony.
   cherubins: This is an irregular plural form, which, along with cherubims, was used up til the mid seventeenth century. (The common plural for cherib is cherubim). Young-eyed cherubins refers to their sight being ever-young—eternally clear-sighted, but also it could refer to a child’s sight which is ever-innocent, accepting, and non-judgmental. Being young-eyed could also refer to cherubim who appear as young-eyed, as beautiful children (with wings), which is the way they were often represented in Renaissance art. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.62]
27. Even the motion of the smallest orb,
   Is part of a grand symphony, his motion
   Plays a song which none but an angel sings, / Plays notes which only an angel could sing.
   In a choir of heavenly voices. / Singing in consort to the cherubins
28. Lorenzo is saying that we cannot hear the ‘music of the spheres’—which resonates with our immortal soul—because our soul is entombed in this gross body which, through its senses, is not keen or refined enough to hear the divine music. 29. This philosophical exposition is impersonal and neither speaks of nor reflects any feelings of love he might have for Jessica. Such a discourse does not compare in sentiment to the single line: ‘If music be the food of love, play on.’ 30. Diana is the goddess of the moon. Lorenzo is asking the musicians to play so as to coax out Diana (the moon) and have her come out from behind a cloud.
31. An additional line could be added to clarify the reference to Diana, as goddess of the moon: 〈And let her shining face alight the sky〉 / (Let her illumine the sky with her face.)
32. touches: / strains / chords > notes played by the fingers touching, or plucking, a string
33. mistress ear: Q1 does not use an apostrophe to imply the possessive form (i.e., mistress’s) since it is understood to be possessive, and since the extra syllable would corrupt the meter.
34. sweet: soft, gentle, pleasing, soothing, melodious, etc.
35. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.69]
36. Jessica says that she is never merry when hearing sweet music, which suggests that even the most sublime and beautiful exterior circumstances cannot bring joy to Jessica, whose mind is besieged with turmoil. We might interpret her use of the term never however, to mean ‘lately,’ thus indicating that something is now disturbing her, so much so, that even sweet music cannot allay it. Similar to the mix-matched response that Antonio receives in regard to his inner sadness (Your mind is tossing on the ocean) Jessica receives the same kind of reply from Lorenzo: (For do but note a wild and wanton herd | Or race of youthful and unhandled colts | Fetching mad bounds). Lorenzo’s winded exposition is lost on Jessica—neither music nor Lorenzo’s reply about the calming effect of music, has any calming or joyful effect on her.
—Lorenzo

The reason is your mind is too engrossed\(^\circ\) 37 / distracted

\{With all your\(^\circ\) thoughts and it cannot enjoy\}

The peace and beauty that\(^\circ\) embraces you. 38, 39 / The wonderment that now

\{All you need do is listen with your heart. \}

__________________________________________ [Lines from the previous dialogue have been deleted] 40

\textit{Enter Portia and Nerissa, approaching}

---

37. \{The reason is, your spirits are attentive\}
38. \{The reason is, your spirits are attentive\}
39. \{The reason is you’re too concerned with\(^\circ\) every / involved with / engrossed in\}

Thought and emotion. Sweet, just let them be:

\textbf{spirits:} mindstuff, awareness, consciousness; the senses, faculties of perception, the mind and its thoughts/emotions.

Hence, Lorenzo is saying that Jessica is too pre-occupied with her own thoughts and state of mind to enjoy and appreciate the beauty around her. Her spirit (awareness, attention) too focused upon, occupied by (attentive to) her thoughts, concerns, troubles, etc.

40. The whole of Lorenzo’s discourse is filled with discordant and accusative images—ironic when speaking about the beauty of music, and far less harmonious than his prior words. After Jessica’s statement that she is never merry when she hears sweet music, Lorenzo does not inquire as to the reason why she feels this way, nor does he try to comfort her, but continues with his philosophical waxing. In response to Lorenzo, we hear no reply from Jessica, nor do we ever hear her speak again (except as part of a group command given by Portia [119-121]). Thus, the last entry regarding Lorenzo and Jessica remains one of stark division, with Jessica’s last words being: \textit{I am never merry when I hear sweet music}. We see that Shylock’s last line in the original is equally as feeble \{I pray you, give me leave to go from hence; | I am not well. Send the deed after me, [And I will sign it.].\}

In deference to brevity and aesthetics, the whole of Lorenzo’s passage (or major portions thereof) could be deleted. The close of the scene between the two lovers might have an ominous sense if it simply ends with Jessica’s last line, \textit{I am never merry when I hear sweet music} [69]. In this rectification, the dialogue is made to end on a softer tone with four, somewhat appeasing, lines offered by Lorenzo. The original text (of 18 lines) most of which are harsh, accusatory, and ill-rubbing have been deleted from this version. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.71, for Lorenzo’s full discourse].
—Portia [looking toward the house]
That light we see is burning in my hall—
How far that little candle throws its beams!
So shines a good deed in a wicked world.

—Nerissa
When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

—Portia
So doth the greater glory dim the lesser.
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until the king arrives and then his status
 empties itself, as doth an inland brook,
Into the vaster ocean. Music. Listen!

Music plays.

—Nerissa
It is your music, madam, from the house.

—Portia
Nothing is good without the proper setting:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter with the night.

—Nerissa
Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

—Portia
The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither one is heard; and yet, I think,
The nightingale, if she should sing by day—
When every goose is cackling—would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things, by proper setting, come

41. {Nothing is good, I see, without respect}
   *respect:* a) context, b) appreciation, c) the support of a beneficial context, surrounding, mood, etc.
   Portia is saying: Things are made good by the proper context; one can appreciate the goodness of a thing when they are set in the right context. Hence, the music sounds better in the context of night (which is still) as opposed to day (which is filled with noise and activity). [See Additional Note, 5.1.99]
42. {How many things by season seasoned are}
   /How many things by season are delivered / inspired / uplifted
Into their o rightful place and true perfection. 43 44 / highest praise
Peace ho—the moon sleeps with her secret love / in a darkened cave 45
And would not be awakened.

Light fades as the moon passes behind a cloud
Music stops

—Lorenzo That is the voice
Of Portia, else I am much deceived. o / mistaken
—Portia
He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo—
By the bad voice.

—Lorenzo Dear lady, welcome home!
—Portia
We have been praying for our husbands’ welfare,
Hoping our words will bring them safe return. o 46 47 / That their endeavor may be bountiful

43 / All things, by right occasion, realize o / come upon / discover
Their highest place and find their true perfection.
How many things by their appointed season
Are thus delivered to their true perfection.
All things, by season, o are delivered to / setting / context
Their rightful place and to their true perfection.
44. {To their right praise and true perfection!} / To their right place and true perfection!
/ To their right praise and realize their perfection
45. {Peace, how the moon sleeps with Endymion} / Peace, how the moon sleeps behind a dark cloud / Peace, how the moon sleeps with her youthful shepherd
Q1 reads: {Peace, how the moone sleepe with Endimion}. Many editions (such as Oxford, Cambridge, Bevington, etc.) punctuate the verse as: Peace ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion. Peace, ho! would indicate a surprise (such as ‘Oh look!’ or ‘Wait now!’). The scene can be staged in two ways: a) Portia makes a reference to the moon in the sky, saying, ‘Peace, the moon is still behind a cloud’ or b) Portia makes a reference to Lorenzo and Jessica (who are asleep in each other’s arms) likening the two to Diana (the moon) and Endymion (who, according to myth, sleeps with the moon). The later staging is adopted by many editions—so much so that an extra stage direction, indicating that Portia sees Lorenzo and Jessica, is sometimes added to the text. This staging, though clever, is unlikely—though certainly possible—because Lorenzo and Jessica are eagerly awaiting the near arrival of Portia. The more likely staging is that Portia is referring to the moon, still behind a cloud—perhaps indicating an uneasy darkness as she arrives back home—and Lorenzo (attentively awaiting her arrival) overhears her comments. Most editions indicate that the music ceases when Portia arrives home. The Oxford Edition (Halio) emends Portia’s lines as follows:
To their right place and true perfection!
She sees Lorenzo and Jessica
Peace ho! Music ceases. The moons sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awakened.
In Greek legend, Endymion was a young shepherd who lived on Mount Latmos. Enamored by his beauty, Selene (Diana), the goddess of the moon, put him to sleep forever, in a cave, so she could visit him whenever it pleased her. Portia is saying that moon—now hidden behind a cloud—has gone into a cave to sleep with Endymion.
[See Additional Note, 5.1.109]
46/ Which speed, we hope, the better for our words} / That they may prosper from our uttered words
which speed: a) who succeed, who prosper, b) who quickly come to a beneficial result
we hope, the better for our words: whose success, we hope, has been supported by our prayers
47. / We have been praying for our husbands’ welfare | And hope they prosper the more by our words.
/ We have been praying for our husbands’ welfare | That they have quick and prosperous results | Which, we do hope, has been aided o by our words. / bettered / helped
Have they returned?

—Lorenzo Madam, they are not yet.
But there has come a messenger before
To signify their coming. 

—Portia Go, Nerissa,
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence,
Nor you Lorenzo—Jessica, nor you.

A tucket sounds

—Lorenzo
Your husband is at hand, I hear his trumpet.
We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not.

The cloud passes and the moon shines again

—Portia
This night methinks is but the daylight sick.
It looks a little paler, like a day
That finds the sun conceal’d by a cloud.

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers

—Bassanio [overhearing Portia]
We should hold day with all the cavern-dwellers;
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

---

48. {Give order to my servants that they take [No note at all of our being absent hence]
49. A tucket is a distinctive ‘signature tune’ played on a trumpet to announce the arrival of those of high or royal standing. The tucket we hear is to signify the arrival of Bassanio. It is not likely that any of the parties have yet heard this tucket but, by inference, and by knowing of Bassanio’s immanent arrival, they surmise that it is Bassanio’s tucket.
50. {We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not} / We shall not say a thing, madam, fear not
51. ‘Tis a day [Such as the day is when the sun is hid].
52. After hearing Bassanio’s tucket the only words Portia states—which serve as her announcement of him—is a reference to the night, which looks like daylight sick, as pale as a day when the sun is hid. Perhaps the metaphor is in reference to herself, as the sun, and to her own shining, which (upon her new master’s return) will be obscured, like a dull cloud obscuring the sun. (In the next line, Bassanio unwittingly extends this analogy by likening Portia to the sun).
One could interpret Portia’s ‘talk about the weather’ in a more innocuous way: she abruptly changes the subject to talk about something banal, chit-chat as it were, as a way to hide her expectancy and appear somewhat coy and nonchalant about Bassanio’s immanent arrival. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.126]
53. {We should hold day with the Antipodes} / Those who live in China
54. {If you would walk in absence of the sun} / If you would walk when sunlight was not shining

Antipodes: (lit. ‘opposite feet’); those who walk on the opposite side of the globe; those who walk in the day when we walk in the night, and vice versa.
The replacement of “Antipodes” with “cavern-dwellers” is not wholly accurate; this replacement was made because “Antipode” is not a readily-recognizable word.
53. {If you would walk in absence of the sun} / If you would walk when sunlight was not shining

walk: A metaphor for the sun’s apparent journey, or walk, through the sky, which brings about night and day. Herein Portia is likened to the brightness of the sun and her walking to the sun’s movement. Thus, she brings illumination, or daylight, even when the sun is absent (i.e. at night). Notice the complete opposite sentiment in Portia’s first comments about Bassanio—as daylight sick—and Bassanio comments about Portia, as the light-giving sun. ‘If you would always walk in the night, it would be day with us, as it now is on the other side of the globe.’ (Malone)
Portia
Let me give light but let me not be light:
For when a wife is light in keeping vows
It maketh for a heavy-hearted husband—
And never shall Bassanio be for me.
But God wills all! You are welcome home, my lord.

Bassanio
I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio, To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Gratiziano and Nerissa converse on their own

Portia
You should, in all sense, be much bound to him
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Antonio
The bounds of which I’m well acquitted of.

Portia
Sir, you are very welcome to our house
Yet it must show in other ways than words;
Thus I’ll make short of this long-winded welcome.

56. be light: be unchaste; be unfaithful in the keeping of one’s vows. Light in this context is in contrast to heavy. In terms of weight, light implies free, whereas heavy implies a physical weight, or a heavy chain, such as one that keeps a women in place. Light (meaning a happy and carefree disposition) contrasted with heavy (i.e., sad and depressed). Here, be light refers to Portia being unfaithful which would cause Bassanio to be heavy (sad). The implication is that Bassanio should not do anything to make Portia light, unchaste.
57. / For when a wife is light in keeping vows | She makes herself a heavy -hearted husband.
58. / For a light wife doth make a heavy husband
As previously noted, light and heavy, which usually refers to opposite measures of weight herein refers to human states—a light wife (unchaste) and a heavy (husband) one’s whose is burdened or weighed down with grief.
59. / But God sort all
God works everything out according to His plan; God will work it all out, and put everything in order, and make things right. Portia is adding this ex post facto caveat—an escape clause—which commands the power to contradict her previous statement about her never making Bassanio a heavy husband—a husband who is sad over her being unfaithful to him. She is saying: ‘I will never be unfaithful but . . .’ Here she is setting the stage for the next confrontation, where she claims to have slept with the doctor in order to get back the ring that Bassanio gave away.
60. / We are most honored, sir, to have you here
61. / good sense / reason
62. / You should, in every sense, be bound to him
63. / And from such bounds I have been fully freed
64. / my lord be so for me
65. / sort} > orders, ordains

56. / Because a wife who’s light . . . Doth brings about / a husband’s heavy-heart
57. / my lord be so for me
60. / sort} > orders, ordains

58. / my lord be so for me
60. / sort} > orders, ordains

61. / You should, in all sense, be much bound to him
62. / good sense / reason
63. / And from such bounds I have been fully freed
64. / my lord be so for me
65. / sort} > orders, ordains

61. / You should, in all sense, be much bound to him
62. / good sense / reason
63. / And from such bounds I have been fully freed
65. / sort} > orders, ordains

61. / You should, in all sense, be much bound to him
—Gratiano [to Nerissa]
By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong. 66
In faith,° I gave it to the judge’s clerk— / In truth
And I would have his manly parts cut off
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart. 68 / Since you, my love, take it so much to he

—Portia
A quarrel, ho, already! What about?°
(What’s the matter?)

—Gratiano
About a hoop° of gold, a paltry° ring / band // petty
That she did give me, whose lett’ring was,° 69 / posey // motto
For all to see,° like cutler’s poetry, / for all the world // by all accounts
(The kind of words that one would find scribbled )
Upon a knife: ‘Love me and leave me not.’ 70

—Nerissa
Why talk you of the wording° or the value?— / poesy // motto
You swore to me when I gave it to you° / I presented it
That you would wear it till your° hour of death, / thy
And that it should° lie with you in your grave. / would
Though not for me,° yet for your vehement oaths, / > on my account
You should have been more careful° and have keep it. / been respective // had more reverence
Gave to a judge’s clerk?! No, God’s my judge, °
That ‘judge’s clerk’ will ne’er grow hair on her face! 72

—Gratiano
He will, and if he live to be a man.

—Nerissa
Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

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66. Gratiano swears by yonder moon, which is fickle and inconsistent, and which, at this point in the play, has been obscured by clouds.
68. {Would he were gelt that had it, for my part | Since you do take it love, so much to heart}
gelt: gelded or castrated; also a play on gelt, money.
/ Would he who has the ring have his endowment | Cut off, for all I care—since you, my love, | Are so upset over this little thing. // Would he who has the ring have but his manly | Portions lopped off, for all I care, since you, | My love, are taking this so much to heart. // Would he who has the ring be castrated | (For all I care—and that is what I say,) | Since you do take it, love, so much to heart.
69. / That she gave me, whose trite inscription was, / for all the world like cutler’s poetry | Upon a knife, ‘Love me, and leave me not.’
/ By all account, like a butcher’s attempt | At poetry, with dull words that be scribbled | Upon a knife—‘Love me and leave me not.’
70. / By all accounts, like a knife-maker’s poem— | Some posy scribbled upon a cheap knife | With the fine words: ‘Love me, and leave me not.’
/ Naught but a cutler’s try at poetry, | With fetching° words, as: ‘Love me, don’t leave me.’ / sapless / tired
It was common for a trite motto to be inscribed on a knife blade and such a motto, or posy, was put on the blade by the cutler or knife-maker (not a poet). Gratiano is here trying to lessen the value of Nerissa’s ring by saying its inscription was trite and written with the same skill as that of a knife-maker—with a cliché inscriptions one would find on his knife. The irony is that Gratiano, whose words are often crude and unpoetic, is now placing some kind of value on poetry.
72. {Gave it a judge’s clerk! No, God’s my judge, | The clerk will ne’er wear hair on’s face that had it}
—Gratziano
Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge’s clerk,
A prating boy, who begged it as a fee.
I could not, for my heart, deny it him.

—Portia
I must be plain with you: you are to blame,
To part so slightly with your wife’s first gift—
A thing placed on with oaths upon your finger,
And so riveted, with faith, unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it—and here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him, he would not leave it,
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That all the world could muster. Gratziano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause for grief.
An ‘twere to me, I would be fuming mad.

—Bassanio [aside]
Why, I were best to sunder my left hand,
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

—Gratziano
My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge who begged it, and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk
Who took some pains in writing, he begged mine—
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

—Portia What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received from me.

—Bassanio
If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it, but you see my finger

73. {You were to blame, I must be plain with you}
74. {That the world masters, Now in faith, Gratziano}
75. / Your callous act does bring your wife much grief / Your blund’ring act is cause for all her grief.
76. {And ‘twere to me I should be mad at it}
   ‘twere to me: if it were up to me (to react in the same situation); if this were done to me
   / Had you done this to me, I’d be fuming / And were it me, I would be fuming mad. / If this were done to me I’d be
   incensed (/indignant / outraged) / If you did this to me, I’d be incensed
77. / Yet your man, too, did give away his ring
78. / Who was deserving of it; then his clerk,
79. / And man nor master would take nothing else
Hath not the ring upon it. It is gone.

—Portia
Even so void is your false heart of truth. By heaven, I will ne’er come to your bed Until I see the ring!

—Nerissa
Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

—Bassanio
Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would realize for what I gave the ring, And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When naught would be accepted but the ring, You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

—Portia
If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness who gave the ring,
Or your own honour to keep safe the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring—
And it appears, you were not even pleased To defend it with any kind of zeal.

What man is there so deficient in reason,
So wont of modesty, as to demand

80. / And ever gone is the truth from your heart / And e’er so void of all truth is your false heart / And so your heart, too, is bereft of truth
81. / By heaven, I swear, I’ll ne’er lay with you / bed / sleep
82. / And gone from your false heart, is all semblance / Of truth! I swear, I’ll ne’er come to your bed

Until I see the ring!

83. Most modern editions set the previous two lines in the standard iambic pentameter, which suggests no significant pause in the dialogue. Q1 sets the verse as four half lines (6-4-6-4 syllables) whereas F1 sets it with two half lines and one full line. (6-10-4 syllables). Q1 could be read with or without a pause in the dialogue, whereas the F1 setting demands two pauses:

Q1 Until I see the ring! F1 Until I see the Ring.
Ner. Nor I in yours Ner. Nor I in yours, til I again see mine.
Till I again see mine!
Bas. Sweet Portia, Bass. Sweet Portia If you did know . . .

84. / When nothing would be had except the ring
A thing made sacred by a ceremony?  

I hear the praises of this worthy judge.  

But now methinks there is no judge at all!  

Nerissa, teaches me what to believe:  

I’ll bet my life some woman has the ring.  

—Bassanio

No, by my honor, madam, by my soul,  

No woman has it, but a civil doctor  

Who did refuse three thousand ducats from me,  

And begged the ring, the which I did deny him,  

And suffered him to go away displeased—  

Even he who had saved the very life  

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?  

I was enforced to send it after him.  

I was beset with shame, and felt moreover  

To give the ring was the right thing to do.  

My honour would not let ingratitude  

So much besmear it.  

Pardon me, good lady,  

For by these blessed candles of the night  

Had you been there I think you would have begged  

The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.  

—Bassanio

No, by my honor, madam, by my soul,  

No woman has it, but a civil doctor  

Who did refuse three thousand ducats from me,  

And begged the ring, the which I did deny him,  

And suffered him to go away displeased—  

Even he who had saved the very life  

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?  

I was enforced to send it after him.  

I was beset with shame, and felt moreover  

To give the ring was the right thing to do.  

My honour would not let ingratitude  

So much besmear it.  

Pardon me, good lady,  

For by these blessed candles of the night  

Had you been there I think you would have begged  

The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

85. {What man is there so unreasonable—  

If you had pleased to have defended it  

With any terms of zeal—wanted the modesty  

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?}  

With any kind of zeal—wished the modesty  

On the thing with such sentimental value?  

[See Additional Notes, 5.1.206]

87. /I keep on hearing praise of this good judge  

88. {Nerissa teaches me what to believe:} / Nerissa, teaches me the right lesson:  

89. {I’ll die for’t, but some woman had the ring!}  

91. / I was o’ertaken by shame, feeling that  

92. {I was beset with shame and courtesy}  

/ I was o’ertaken by a deepened shame / I was beset with guilt and obligation / I was beset with disgrace and decorum / I was beset with feelings of disgrace [ (And a deep sense that I should give the ring)  

shame: a sense of dishonor, disgrace  

courtesy: a sense of moral obligation, feeling that giving the ring was the right thing to do.

93. /And I could not let such ingratitude Besmear my honor. Pardon me, good lady,  

94. Giving away Portia’s ring, at the request of Antonio, shows Bassanio’s loyalty to Antonio above Portia. Moreover, it reveals Bassanio’s weakness of character, and his inability to keep his own word or honor his own vows (which is consistent with his irresponsible and care-free character). He says he broke the vow to Portia to uphold his honor and show his gratitude, and because he was enforced—thus showing that he holds these self-concerned promptings greater than Portia and the vow he made to her. How is Portia to feel about such an act? What does it tell her about her new lord and master?  

95. {For by these blessed candles of the night} / For by these stars, whose light doth bless the heavens  

This oath—to the stars of the night sky—carries with it the same irony as Gratianio’s swearing by yonder moon: both the light of the moon, and the stars (on this night) are inconsistent and covered up by the clouds. The stars, as well, are soon to fade as morning is swift approaching.  

96. / That I give the ring to the worthy doctor.
—Portia
Let not that doctor e’er come near my house.
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved, \^/
and that which you did swear to keep for me.
I will become as generous as you. \^/
I’ll not deny him anything I have—\^/
No, not my body, nor my husband’s bed.
‘Know him I shall, I am well sure of it. \^/
Lie not a night from your home. Watch me like Argus, (Who guarded Io with a hundred eyes,) \^/
If you do not, if I be left alone,
Now, by mine honour, which is still mine own, \^/
I’ll have the doctor for my bedfellow. \^/

—Nerissa
And I his clerk. Therefore, be well-advised
If you do leave me to mine own protection.

—Gratiano
Do as you will. \^/
Let not me catch him, then,
For if I do, I’ll break the young clerk’s pen.

—Antonio
I am th’unhappy subject of these quarrels.

—Portia
Sir, grieve not—none of this is caused by you. \^/

—Bassanio
Portia, forgive me this enforcèd wrong;
And in the witness of these many friends \^/
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

97. he: Portia now accepts Bassanio’s statement that he gave the ring to a man, but here she shifts her game, saying that she, too, will give herself to this man.
98. know him: have sexual relations with him. Compare Portia’s parting words to Bassanio in the previous scene [4.1.415]: ‘I pray you, know me when we meet again.’
99. Argus: Argus Panoptes, the all-seeing, hundred-eyed giant who was set to guard Io, daughter of the river god, Inachus. (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.622-77). Also compare the Indian myth of Malini, whose beauty was so great that Lord Shiva sprouted eyes on every side of his head so he could look at her even when she walked around him.
100. Lie not a night away from home. Like Argus, | (With all his hundred eyes, you watch o’er me.)
101. by mine honor, which is yet mine own:
   a) by my chastity (virginity) which is still intact, still unbroken, still mine own (having not been taken by anyone as of yet).
   b) by my vows, which have not been broken. This is in contrast to Bassanio’s honor which is not his own, as he has given it away when he broke his vow to keep the ring.
   Portia’s reference to honour, is a continuation of Bassanio’s previous claim: *No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,* | *No woman had it, but a civil doctor. (209)*
102. / I’ll share a bed with that worthy doctor.
103. / Sir, grieve not—you are not the cause of this.
104. / Sir, grieve not you, you are welcome notwithstanding} / Sir, grieve not you—} you’re welcome nonetheless.
105. / And with these many friend as faithful witness,
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself. And then he swears upon his two-faced self. Now there’s an oath to count on!

Bassanio

Pardon this fault and, by my soul I swear, I never more will break an oath with thee.

Antonio

I once did lend my body for his welfare. Which, but for him who has your husband’s ring, my life would have been lost. I dare be bound again, my soul upon the forfeit, That your lord will never knowingly, wittingly, break faith.
Portia
Then you shall be his bondsman.○

*She takes the ring from her finger*
Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.○

Antonio [giving the ring to Bassanio]
Here, Lord Bassanio—swear to keep this ring.

Bassanio
By heaven it is○ the same I gave the doctor!

Portia
I had it of him.○ Pardon me, Bassanio,116
But for this ring the doctor lay with me.○ 117

Nerissa
And pardon me, my gentle Gratziano,
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor’s clerk,
In lieu of this [showing her ring] last night did lie with me. ○ 118

Gratziano
Why this is like the mending of highways
In summer, when no such repair is needed—

---

115. Here Portia is testing Bassanio, and outwitting him—and ‘playing him like a fiddle.’ As with Shylock, she plays from the position of advantage, of being ‘one up,’ i.e., knowing the outcome before she even begins. Here (as in the trial scene) she escalates the confrontation: First she accuses Bassanio of giving the ring to a woman; then she accepts that he gave the ring to a man (the doctor); then she says that she will be as liberal (and giving of herself) to the doctor as was Bassanio (because he hath got the jewel that I loved); and finally (in the next passage) she says that she already gave herself to the doctor—a tormenting lie that must have made Bassanio’s heart sink. The significant outcome of her orchestration is in securing Antonio as surety for Bassanio’s vow to her. (Remember that he broke his vow to her in favor of Antonio’s request). Now, with Antonio as his bondsman, Bassanio cannot break his vow to Portia over anything involving Antonio. Further, this could be seen as a kind of second wedding, where Antonio is symbolically giving away Bassanio, as a father might give away a dear son to his new bride. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.255]

116. {I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio}  
Portia is echoing Bassanio and using his words against him. In 247-48 Bassanio asks for Portia’s pardon in regards to his giving away the ring, saying: Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear I never more will break an oath with thee. Here she uses the same plea and asks him to pardon her for laying with the doctor (in order to get back the ring that he gave away). It seems that Portia assigns a similar value to Bassanio’s vow (to keep the ring) as she does to her own vow of chastity.

117. / But for this ring, I made love with the doctor  
Portia telling Bassanio that she ‘lay’ with the doctor is a somewhat brutal claim—and perhaps, in her mind, deservedly so. This is mitigated by the fact that she only lets him squirm for a few seconds.

118. {Why this is like the mending of highways | In summer, when the roads need no such fixing}  
The insinuation with this metaphor—comparing Nerissa to a road—is that the road is being (or has been) dug up and is therefore ruined in the sense that it cannot be traveled upon. Nerissa has been ruined by her sleeping with the clerk and now Gratziano cannot travel upon that road (because it is unfit for use).
(Which makes the road all rough and ruined for use.)
You have cheated us, ere we have deserved it!

—Portia

Speak not so grossly. There is much confusion.

(We were with you in Venice the whole time;
There never was a doctor nor his clerk.)
Thus you shall find that I was the doctor,
Nerissa there my clerk. Lorenzo here
Shall witness, I set forth as soon as you
And have just now returned. I have not yet
Entered my house. [{And here is a letter
Explaining it all.}] Antonio, for you
I have much better news than you expect. [{takes out a letter
Unseal this letter soon. There you shall find,
That suddenly, three of your argosies
Have come to port, their hulls replete with riches.}
You’d not believe by what strange accident
I chanced upon this letter.]

—Antonio [reading the letter] I am speechless!

—Bassanio [to Portia]
Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

119. / And thus, the highway is not fit for use / Which makes the highway ruined for good use / And it but the highway for use / And, in the meantime, are ruined for use / And they’re then ruined for fair travel and use
120. The following two lines, which could be added, help clarify Gratiano’s previous metaphor:
{Why the best fruit has been given away / Before we even had the chance to eat it!}
121. {What, we are cuckold ere we have deserved it? / We are betrayed before our wedding night! / Why we got shafted ‘fore our wedding night! / The fruit’s gone rancid before we could eat it! / The fruit’s been plucked and no longer worth eating.
122. {Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed}
123. These two lines replace the following lines found in the original [268-69]:
{Here is a letter. Read it at your leisure / It comes from Padua, from Bellario.} The line, ‘And here is a letter which explains it all’ is emended to Portia’s speech a few lines later. This would then indicate that Portia wrote the letter, not Bellario. There seems to be no reason as to why (or when, or for whom, or for what purpose) Bellario would have written such a letter—and no reason as to why Portia would need to produce it. Portia’s simple telling of the story, and how she was the doctor, would clear up all doubt; she needn’t produce, or go to the trouble of writing a letter to explain it all. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.267]
124. As mentioned in the previous note, the production of any explanatory letter, by Portia, is not needed. To preserve the triplicate delivery of letters, however, this delivery could be included. If one prefers a more likely scenario—where Portia simply explains everything in person, rather than deliver a letter—then this line could be replaced with the following: {And soon I will explain The whole thing to you.}
125. [. . . Unseal this letter soon. / There you shall find three of your argosies / Are richly come to harbor suddenly.}
126. Portia coming upon the news of Antonio’s argosies coming to port before Antonio stands out as an anomaly. She must have come upon this news while on the road from Venice to Belmont. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.277]
127. {You shall not know by what strange accident / You shall not know by what coincidence
you shall not know: you would not believe, you’d never guess
strange accident: coincidence, unlikely circumstance
128. Replace last three lines with two:
/Have richly come to port. You shall not know / you’d never guess
Having strange it was I chanced upon this letter.
129. Portia never answers this question. When Gratianio asks the same question of Nerissa, she immediately reassures him with a positive response.
—Gratziano [to Nerissa]
Were you the clerk who came to cheat on me?°
[that is to make me cuckold]

—Nerissa
Ay, but the clerk who never means to do it
Unless, perchance, he turns into a man.°
/ who’d ne’er do such a thing
[Unless he live until he be a man]

—Bassanio 130
Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow.
When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

—Antonio
Sweet lady, you have given me life and living,
For here I read for certain that my ships
Have safely come to port. 131

—Portia  And° now, Lorenzo,°
My clerk hath some good comforts, too, for you.

—Nerissa
Ay, and I’ll give him them without a fee. [she hands him the will]
Here° do I give to you and Jessica,
A special deed of gift, from the rich Jew, 132
Who wills you all his wealth upon his death. 133

—Lorenzo
Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way 134
Of starving people. 135 136

130. In 280, Bassanio asks Portia a direct question; in 281, Gratztiano asks Nerissa a direct question; in 282-283, Nerissa responds to Gratztiano’s question; here Portia could answer, to complete the symmetry, but does not. It is Bassanio who offers his own reassuring reply. In all, Portia does not give one reassuring word to Bassanio upon his arrival in Belmont.

131. {Are safely come to road}
[come to road: found a safe harbor, come to dry land]

132. One might expect that an address made in front of Jessica would be: ‘from Jessica’s father’ or ‘from old Shylock’ rather than ‘from the rich Jew.’ (Shylock has converted to Christianity but is still considered—as is Jessica—a Jew.)

133. {After his death, of all he dies possessed of}
[Who grants you all his possessions ‘pon death
/Whom, upon death, bequeaths’ you all he owns.
/ doth leaves]

134. manna: heavenly food which was dropped upon the Israelites in the desert and which sustained them. The notion of a sudden and unexpected ‘gift from heaven’ is implied in the term.

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.” (KJV, Exodus 16:14-15)

135. / You drop a hea’vnly manna in the way / You drop gifts from heaven in the way of | Starvèd people / You drop heavenly manna to people | Starving below.

136. The reference to manna is not exact since the deed of gift gives Lorenzo and Jessica nothing to sustain them. It is a deed of gift when Shylock dies, which could be 20+ years in the future. However, the vast sum of money Antonio has in trust, and is investing, would provide a substantial income to Lorenzo and Jessica.
—Portia [looking at the sky] It is almost morning, 137
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
With an account so brief. 138 Let us go in
And charge us there with cross-examination, 139
And we will answer all things faithfully. 139

—Gratzianno
Let it be so. The first line of questioning 139
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is:
Whether she prefers on the next night to lay
Or go to bed now, with two hours till day? 140
But were the day come, I should wish it night
Till I were couching 141 in my clerk’s delight.
And while I live, I’ll fear no other thing—
So sore as keeping safe 142 Nerissa’s ring.

Exeunt, Couples first, then Antonio

137. It is almost morning. The fairy tale is about to end. No sunset—nothing but a gloomy sunrise. Here, also, the roles of prince and princess are reversed: the prince is now shown to be anything but a prince; and the princes, showing her strong, independent spirit, and superiority over her lord, is hardly a princess in need of rescue. The couples do not ride off into the sunset, to a future of everlasting peace and bliss; they enter into the morning, with the pairs somewhat distant and estranged, and with Antonio as the odd man out.
138. [With these events at full]
139. / So you can probe us with all your questions / And charge us there with your cross-examining
140. / Whether till the next night she had rather stay
   (Or go to bed now, being two hours to day
141. / But were the day come, I should wish it night
   {Till I were couching with the doctor’s clerk
142. This bawdy punning is commonly found at the end of a romantic comedies. Herein the term ring is usually taken as a reference to vulva and Gratzianno’s sore keeping of it—well we need not comment on that!
ACT SIX - Scene One

Venice, in front of Shylock’s House.  
Enter Shylock and Tubal, then Messenger from opposite direction

—Tubal
We still have time for another trade.

—Shylock
Yes, one more trade. [To Messenger] How now, what news?

—Messenger
I bring a letter from your daughter.

—Shylock
From Jessica? From my daughter?

Messenger hands Shylock the letter and exits.
He tries to open it but his hands are too shaky. He hands it to Tubal, who opens the letter and glances over it.

—Tubal  [glancing at letter]
She’ll be in Venice, soon, and wants to see you. It is good news my friend, ’tis all good news. ¹

Tubal lifts up Shylock’s turquoise ring and returns it to him with the letter

—Shylock [holding the ring, glancing off]
When comes the end our treasures turn to dust
Our fortunes give but e’er take as they must; / take away they must
My life, my deeds, and my ducats suffice, / are lost
I’ve gained a fortune at so high a price.° / some comfort at too high a price
And now my friend, I must bid you good-bye, / a sight to see // an old man/
’Tis not slightly to see° ‘ol Shylock° cry. ²

Tubal exits
Shylock sits alone with ring and letter in hand

END

¹. Optional lines could be added here:
Surely, methinks, before ol’ Shylock dies,  
He’ll find a smile in his daughter’s eyes.